This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

**Usage guidelines**

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

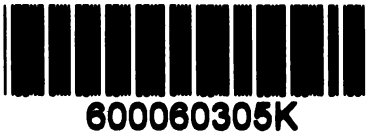
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

**About Google Book Search**

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`


600060305K

# TINSLEY BROTHERS' NEW WORKS

## AT ALL LIBRARIES.

### NOTICE.

A New Historical Work, by J. HENEAGE JESSE, Author of "The Court of England under the Stuarts," &c.

**MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE AND REIGN OF KING GEORGE THE THIRD;**

With Original Letters of the King, and other Unpublished MSS.
In 3 vols. 8vo. [*Ready.*

---

**THE BATTLE-FIELDS OF 1866.** By EDWARD DICEY, Author of "Rome in 1860," &c. [*Ready.*

**FROM WATERLOO TO THE PENINSULA.** By G. A. SALA, Author of "My Diary in America," &c. 2 vols. [*Ready.*

**THE REGENCY OF ANNE OF AUSTRIA,** Queen of France, Mother of Louis XIV. From Published and Unpublished Sources. With Portrait. By Miss FREER. 2 vols. [*Ready.*

**THREE HUNDRED YEARS OF A NORMAN HOUSE,** with Genealogical Miscellanies. By JAMES HANNAY, Author of "A Course of English Literature," "Satire and Satirists," &c. In 1 vol. 12*s.*

**BIOGRAPHIES AND PORTRAITS OF SOME CELEBRATED PEOPLE.** By ALPHONSE DE LAMARTINE. 2 vols. [*Ready.*

**TOWN AND COUNTRY.** By ANDREW HALLIDAY, Author of "Everyday Papers," and "Sunnyside Papers." In 1 vol. [*Ready.*

**TEN YEARS IN SARAWAK.** By CHARLES BROOKE, the "Tuanmudah" of Sarawak. With an Introduction by H. H. the Rajah Sir JAMES BROOKE, and numerous Illustrations. Uniform with Captain Burton's "Mission to Dahomey." In 2 vols. [*Ready.*

**FROM CALCUTTA TO THE SNOWY RANGE.** By AN OLD INDIAN. 1 vol. with numerous coloured Illustrations. [*Ready.*

**THE HISTORY OF FRANCE UNDER THE BOURBONS.** By CHARLES DUKE YONGE, Author of "The History of the Royal Navy." In 2 vols. 8vo. [*Ready.*

**THE EASTERN HUNTERS.** By Capt. JAMES NEWALL. 1 vol. 8vo, with numerous Illustrations. [*Ready.*

**New Work suitable for Students and Schools.**

**A COURSE OF ENGLISH LITERATURE.** By JAMES HANNAY. 1 vol. [*Ready.*

**MODERN CHARACTERISTICS:** a Series of Essays from the *Saturday Review*, revised by the Author. In 1 vol. handsomely printed, and bevelled boards. [*Second and Revised Edition this day.*

**New Edition, Revised, of Everyday Papers.**

**EVERYDAY PAPERS.** Reprinted from "All the Year Round," and adapted for Evening Reading at Mechanics' Institutes, Penny Reading Clubs, &c. By ANDREW HALLIDAY. In 1 vol.

**ARCHIE LOVELL.** By the Author of "Miss Forrester," "The Morals of Mayfair," &c. In 3 vols.

**THE RICH HUSBAND.** A New and Revised Edition. By Mrs. J. H. RIDDELL, Author of "George Geith," "The Race for Wealth," &c. 1 vol. 6*s.* [*Ready.*

**DACIA SINGLETON.** A Novel. By the Author of "What Money Can't Do," "Altogether Wrong," &c. In 3 vols. [*Ready.*

# BENT, NOT BROKEN.

A Tale.

BY

GEORGE MANVILLE FENN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
TINSLEY BROTHERS, 18, CATHERINE ST., STRAND.
1867.

[*The Right of Translation and Reproduction is reserved.*]

250. o. 247.

| CHAP. | PAGE |
|---|---|
| XV.—QUERY, WHICH ROAD? . . . . . | 220 |
| XVI.—FATHER AND DAUGHTER . . . . . | 235 |
| XVII.—A SPICY HORSE . . . . . | 250 |
| XVIII.—STEPHEN VAUGHAN EMULATES AN OLD FRIEND | 270 |
| XIX.—ASSAULT AND BATTERY . . . . . | 303 |

# BENT, NOT BROKEN.

## CHAPTER I.

### FIRE AND WATER.

And for the moment it seemed as though the Devil had taken possession of his soul, for he stood looking at his struggling companion without stretching forth a hand to save him.

"Would he were dead, would he were dead," a voice seemed to mutter in his ear: and Stephen Vaughan stood upon the edge of the mill-pool with his features distorted and vile looking, while Frank struggled fruitlessly to extricate himself from his perilous position. Every moment the water closed over his face, while every effort to free his leg from the broken boat merely

caused the fragile old skiff to float farther from the shore. Another minute would have been Frank's last, when Stephen Vaughan threw up his arms as if beating something off, gave a sharp cry, and then dashed at full speed into the deep water, making it foam and bubble round him, and the skiff to dance as he clove his way with vigorous strokes.

He was soon beside his drowning friend and supporting his head, when it became an easy task to guide the boat to the shore; but it was some few minutes before the exhausted Frank could recover himself sufficiently to draw his foot from the broken planks; and all this while Madeline Glebeley and Alice Vaughan stood speechless with terror, and as it were chained to the spot.

And then it almost seemed as if the Devil, evicted from the soul of Stephen Vaughan, was now looking on from one of the mill windows; for there was a grim Satanic visage staring out upon the scene: but it was only Sampson Elton,

who, as soon as Frank was out of danger, turned away, muttering—"Curse him!" and the cursed one was his stepson.

Tom Phipps, who considered himself, and was also allowed to be, up to a thing or two, said that Waveley was a deuced pretty place in summer, but a dog's hole in winter. He gave no opinion as to spring or autumn, but came at all seasons, and stopped till obliged by business to return to town. Milton, who was about as far removed from Tom Phipps as pole from pole, said something about the mind being its own place, and that it could make what it liked of its abode, and therefore though it is possible that Waveley may have been a purgatorial place to some, yet there were others who could look upon it as a heaven; and for description —it was a country place fifty miles from London.

But Tom Phipps was now most likely making his pen scrawl over sheets of foolscap paper in a close office in that city, where, since his release

from the thraldom of Edgeton high-school, he had been "chained by the leg"—his own words—while his schoolfellows, Frank Henderson, stepson of old Elton at the mill, and Stephen Vaughan, Squire Vaughan's son, from the Hall, went, in the one instance, to Cambridge; and, in the other, to his old home to learn farming, which he did by spending his days in shooting, fishing, hunting, coursing, and such other agreeable pursuits as serve to while away the time of a country gentleman.

As for Sampson Elton of Waveley Mill, he was as ill-looking and ill-conditioned a man as ever wormed himself into the confidence of his master's widow, married her, and then taking possession of the snug business and farm, bullied the poor woman, whose marriage had already most thoroughly excited the disgust of all who knew her, but especially that of Squire Vaughan, who started so when he heard the news that he broke his pipe, spilt his hot gin-and-water all over his legs, and then swore that it was all humbug, for

he did not believe any woman would be fool enough to marry such an ill-looking thief.

Of course, nobody told this to Sampson Elton, but he got to know it somehow, and shook his fist at old Vaughan the next time he passed him and the farmer's burly back was turned; then he went home and snarled at his wife, and ever after made himself a regular brute to his stepson, Frank Henderson, who was but a boy then, but a great favourite with the Squire, who, in conjunction with the Reverend Charles Glebeley, the Rector, was the lad's guardian.

And now it was a summer's day, and floating down the stream—the little Wave—easily, lightly —with an occasional dip of the oar given most lazily to keep the boat's head right,—letting the skiff float along the glassy surface, heedless of the long pull back against the stream, on went the little boating party round bend after bend of the shining river.

Frank and Stephen were at the oars, and they must have been thinking of the coolness of the

evening, or they would never have allowed the boat to have its way unchecked for so long. But the young men were not alone: Madeline Glebeley was there; dark-haired, dark-eyed, and with the soft flush of health mantling in her cheek: Alice Vaughan was there too, blue-eyed, sunny-haired, and bright, nay, sparkling in feature—for a more animated countenance could not have cheered the eye; taper-waisted, with swelling bust, and hips; almost diminutive in size, lips that would have betrayed an anchorite, or even a Druid had he been mistletoe-cutting; she was a perfect little beauty, even to the possessing of well-formed hands and feet; while those who gazed upon her arch dimpled face, and saw her winning ways, were but too glad to own allegiance to such a little queen. The tempting lips were of coral hue, and within them glistened teeth of the pearliest, and again within those teeth was a tiny red tongue ——

Yes—there was a tiny red tongue within those teeth.

Tom Phipps once said, that Nature in giving her such beautiful teeth, by way of compensation placed all the tartar upon her tongue; and he was in dread ever after lest she should know that he made such a remark.

The Squire used to call her his little blossom, and truly she was a little flower—a rose; but the thorns which studded the frail stem were sharp of the sharpest.

And this was the freight of Frank Henderson's old skiff as the light vessel floated along upon that glorious afternoon, sending the frightened fish darting along the shallows like arrows of silver. The sun poured down his beams with all the fervour of July, and, newly awakened from their watery birthplace, the dragon-flies hovered above the heads of the voyagers. The bright green reeds hung their tapering leaves over the water, motionless but for the washing of the stream, while over the deep pools the yellow lily had spread a shade of broad shining fronds, with here and there a golden chalice floating

upon the surface. The banks were studded with the flowers that rejoice to luxuriate in the moist meadows; but, after all, there were none to compare with the fair blossoms that sat beneath the little awning in the boat's stern, screened from the sun's scorching rays, and framed, as it were, in the little nook. Frank and Stephen were stripped, after the fashion affected by the modern disciples of the celebrated Jolly Young Waterman, but little work was done, and even the conversation had flagged as they still floated on and on—now where the river was deep, and calm, and sluggish, or again where it was rushing and turbulent, with hardly water enough to bear up their little vessel, which ever and anon grated upon the gravelly bottom.

So the conversation had somewhat flagged, but the cause could not have been the heat, for the maidens were sheltered from the sun, and had removed their hats to let the wanton breeze play through their hair, when it was plainly to be seen that the rowers would have given something to

have been *pro tem.* a wanton breeze, allowed to play with the flowing locks unchidden. Unevenness of numbers was not the cause of the silence, for no party could have been better arranged, that is, as far as appearances went. But it was evident that something was amiss, for Madeline looked sad and troubled, and Alice half scornful, while her blue eyes flashed, and her little nostrils extended as though she snuffed the war from afar.

Now it must be taken into consideration that the ladies here described had never known the polishing influences of a London season, but had been accustomed to dining at the unfashionable hours of one and two, and not unfrequently then partaking of viands which their own fair hands had helped to prepare. While, as to society, the circle of acquaintances owned by a gentleman farmer, or a rector in a remote agricultural village, is not, generally speaking, of the largest.

"Why, Ally," said Stephen, throwing away the

stump of a cigar, so that it fell with a fizz in the water, "Why, Ally, what's the matter? You look quite pettish."

"Do I?" said the young lady addressed; "perhaps it is from *ennui* caused by the burdensome conversation."

"There, Frank," said Stephen, "that's an arrow for you, my boy. Didn't you hear it whizz? Why, it must have gone right to the mark—into the bull's eye—bull-frog's eye. Let's see, A, Alice; A was an archer, and shot at a frog; —Come, frog, jump."

"What a genius you are, Steve," said his sister. "It is almost a pity we cannot make a martyr of you, by pelting you to death. It is the only way in which you are ever likely to be immortalised. But then we have nothing here but cherries, and I'm sure their stones would make no impression upon your great thick head." And then Alice gave a quick glance at Frank, and coloured with vexation, as if ashamed of what she had said.

"There, Frank," said Stephen, good-humouredly, "let this be a lesson for you. You are given enough to grumbling; but only think what a happy dog you are to have no sister to snub you. For goodness sake take my part, or I shall be finished off."

"And I've no doubt," said Alice, "that your friend, Mr. Henderson, will write your epitaph—something in one of the dead languages, freshly imported from Cambridge. I could suggest something."

"Then pray let us have it," said Frank.

"Why 'Dele,' rubbed out," said Sunny-hair, with her face a-flame.

"No, that wouldn't do," said Stephen; "and besides, I'm too busy to be rubbed out yet. I've no end of work to get done. Let's see, there's Waveley Bottom to be drained——"

"And two boxes of cigars to smoke," interposed his sister.

"And Ponto to break in," continued Stephen.

"And my lessons in fishing," said Madeline,

but colouring directly as if vexed that she had spoken.

"There, if we go on at that rate," cried Stephen "we shall never have done; and I shall find so much work that I shall——"

"Be more stupid than ever," said his sister, interrupting.

"Exactly so, Ally," said the young Hercules; for the climate of Waveley had been most favourable for the development of Stephen Vaughan's bodily proportions; but then his progenitor had set him a most worthy example in that respect. "Exactly so, Ally, I dare say you are right. But if a man—I suppose I am correct in calling myself a man? but if you think not, ladies and gentle*man*, why I must wait till I grow a little bigger."

"No, don't do that, Steve," cried Frank, laughing; "don't, for your tailor's sake. But I think we may set him down as a man now, eh, ladies? How often do you shave, Steve?"

"Twice a week," said Stephen, complacently.

"Then he must be a man," said Frank, laughing; "for Captain Marryat established two shaves a week as a proof of manhood."

"Well," cried Stephen, "when you have done I'll finish; but look out, or we shall get aground. Now pull, both together; that's it."

The boat being once more in mid-stream, Stephen continued,—

"Well, I was going to say, Miss Glebeley, if a man happens to be naturally stupid, he ought not to be blamed for it, ought he? Ally here says I'm a donkey. Very well. If I am an ass, and act up faithfully to my part, I may be a very decent kind of ass in my way, and so after all be a very good sort of fellow."

"Ass-tonishing," said Alice. "Don't answer him, Maddy, he does not deserve it."

"Perhaps," said Frank, "Miss Glebeley is enjoying the skirmish, and finds the prevailing acidity somewhat refreshing."

Alice coloured up to the parting of her hair, and was about to make a sharp retort, but it

would not come; and the reproachful look in her eyes was soon dimmed by the tears of vexation she in vain tried to keep down.

"There, Frank," said Stephen, "you've put your foot in it, old fellow; so the sooner you try and make peace the better. I vote for a walk under the trees;" saying which he gave a stroke or two with his oar and turned the boat's head in amongst the reeds, just where a thick grove of horse chestnuts bent their boughs almost to the water's edge. As he spoke the bow of the skiff went rustling in the pliant growth, when he sprang out and secured the chain to a small bush. Frank then landed and assisted Madeline to step ashore, when she immediately took Stephen Vaughan's offered arm, and Frank was left to take charge of the little offended beauty.

Now at this moment Frank felt in rather an uncomfortable position: he was too generous to wilfully wound, and though most unwilling to be in any way demonstrative towards Alice Vaughan,

yet upon the present occasion he felt bound to try and heal the little scratch he had so thoughtlessly made. But there was something else just at that moment of which he did not quite approve, and that was the apparent eagerness with which Madeline had taken their companion's arm —it almost seemed as if the walk had been prearranged. So Frank Henderson felt a sensation similar to that which burnt up the heart of the swarthy Othello; for, like many more short-sighted mortals, he had not sufficient length of wisdom to plumb the depths of woman's heart.

Altogether, matters had gone as unfortunately as they possibly could in Frank's estimation, and so he told himself as he walked with his companion beneath the shady trees; but then both Alice and Stephen Vaughan thought differently.

Stephen was striding along as hard as he could with any degree of decency draw his companion with him, while Alice seemed as much disposed to linger where she then was. Then,

to change sides, there was a mutual feeling of attraction hard at work inciting Frank and Madeline to get closer together, and the latter was regretting the haste with which she had chosen her partner; and of course fate could not favour both parties at one and the same time.

Alice listened very poutingly to the excuses tendered for her acceptance, and haughtily declined to bestow the sought-for pardon; though all the while her little heart was beating faster with the pleasure she felt, and her eyes would grow more subdued and softened, even though Frank was so stupid that he would not look down into them. And of course these eyes dared not look up into his, any more than their owner could venture to lean upon his arm; but Alice thought of what she would have done had she been Frank, and Frank somebody else; for the little maiden was very romantic in her little way, and knew perfectly well what was the correct thing in such cases, as taught by her

favourite authors—Bulwer Lytton, James, and Ainsworth.

Somehow or another there was quite a feeling of disappointment crept over the little maiden's spirit as she granted the asked-for pardon, from the matter turning out so very ordinary and commonplace. In her vivid imagination there was a very pleasing picture of the chestnut glade wherein they stood, for amidst the checkery shade there was the figure of a Frank leaning over, while supporting the light form of an Alice, which nestled closely to the manly breast; and then, as eyes gazed in eyes, forgiveness was being breathed between the half-parted rosy lips, but quite inaudibly—so softly, in fact, that those of Frank were compelled to touch them, and inhale the pardon in a sweet sigh of so magnetic a nature, that lips clung to lips for goodness knows how many seconds.

But then Alice's was like other people's day-dreams, ready to vanish in an instant, so she only sighed gently, and Frank did not ask why

it was, but actually thought so little of the situation that he said,—

"Had we not better try and catch up to them? They are quite out of sight."

Alice gave her little head a toss and walked silently on, and at the end of a few minutes they came suddenly upon the sought-for couple—Madeline looking both agitated and conscious, and Stephen most ineffably sheepish; while as for Frank, he was unconsciously pressing Alice's little hand so tightly against his side, that she could feel his heart go "thump, thump," when the little maiden's spirits rose, and she gently returned the pressure.

Alas, poor Alice!

One might almost say, Alas, poor Stephen! as well, for he too was just then feeling most bitterly cut and disappointed. He had been trying to make a confession, or declaration, or something of that kind, and now the feeling was on him most strongly that he had made a mess instead. His awkward speeches had been met

by a pained and frightened look that quite startled him; while the startled feeling was directly succeeded by, first anger, and then shame; which latter strongly predominated on the arrival of Frank Henderson. But just then the eyes of the young men met, when the sharp flash from those of Frank acted like a spark on gunpowder, for there was an instant explosion in the breast of Stephen Vaughan; and as the smoke cleared from before his mental vision, he saw what he had never seen before, while a fresh emotion clutched him hardly by the heart.

But Alice was quite brightening. She had been in misery, for with that tongue of hers she felt it impossible to avoid saying sharp things—sayings which were barbed, and even at times quite venomous. And then when one of these keen verbal arrows was sent flying at Frank, she always made the discovery that it was barbed at both ends, while her own bore all the venom.

There they were, strolling about in the chest-

nut grove, all trying very hard to appear light-hearted and unconcerned. Frank darted off into a fresh subject every two minutes, commencing with horse-chestnuts, and ending with the metempsychosis; but it was very hard work, for no one would pick up the innumerable conversational gauntlets he threw down.

One thing, however, seemed to have been arrived at almost by common consent—*tête-à-tête*-ism was out of the question any more that day; and do what they would, it seemed that a wet blanket was held suspended above the heads of the party to keep on drip, drip, drip, till they were all miserable. Alice tried to be very gay, even though Frank had turned quite chilly since there was that slight pressure of his arm; but her gaiety only culminated in a stinging remark directed at her brother, upon whom it acted something like a verbal gadfly on the hide of a metaphorical bull. Madeline appeared quite in pain. However, a semblance of gaiety was kept up, as if to make up for the dreary nature of the

early part of the trip; but all was of the most transparent and unsatisfactory character. Frank, and Stephen, and Alice, would one and all have scouted the idea as absurd, but there, most decidedly, in the cup they were sipping was a tinge of the poison known as jealousy, and strangely it acted upon them: Alice was disposed to bite her lips till they were redder than ever, and say spiteful things; Frank would have liked to be alone; while Stephen felt a gnawing pain, which caused him to direct fierce and ill-veiled glances at his old schoolfellow.

Nature could not stand it any longer: she had spread all her beauties before the party in the most lavish way, laughing around them to impart the joy she felt, but all was of no avail, so turning spiteful, when the boat was once more afloat, she clouded over the sky, and sent down a pitiless rain which drenched the voyagers in a very few minutes.

A pleasant termination to an afternoon's excursion at any time, without hearts being all out

of tune. But there was nothing else for it, and the young men rowed savagely on through the pitted water as the rain came hissing down, and for long enough not a word was spoken. The awning was drawn tightly round the maidens, so that they were invisible, and conversation was of course cut off in that direction; so alone with their thoughts the rowers toiled on till the broad mill-pool was reached, when after the ladies had landed, Frank stepped back hastily into the boat to moor her by the wooden bridge, slipped upon the wet seat, and his foot came heavily upon the thin planking of the bottom.

It was the work of an instant, for as the boat, urged by the impetus he had given it, floated from the landing-place, Frank's foot went through the frail woodwork, and he fell back over the side, but, as it were, so securely trapped, that he was helpless. He toiled, he struggled, and writhed about in the water, but every effort seemed fruitless; and though at another time he could freely have laughed at another in so appa-

rently ridiculous a predicament, yet but for the saving hand of Stephen Vaughan, there would have been the corpse of a drowned man to get ashore.

## CHAPTER II.

### SAMPSON THE STRONG.

When Sampson Elton married Mrs. Henderson some half-score years before, he soon showed that he was in full authority at the mill, and the men there soon found it out—ay, and those who worked on the little farm too. He did not like having those for servants who had been, to a certain extent, his fellow-workmen; so he began changing them by degrees, and he did it not in a quiet business-like manner, but by shabby, underhanded means, so as to rid himself of the onus of having discharged the men. He did it by cruel, bitter tyranny—not your baronial tyranny of the middle ages, but in a Jerry Sneak, slow-torturing modern style — by harsh treatment, fault-finding, and various cunning devices. He would grumble and find fault without reason; look at all the men as

if they were thieves, carrying an air of suspicion about with him, and occasionally bring up some false accusation; and altogether would lead them such a life, that one by one they left him in disgust, and fresh faces—faces of men who had not known the master in his humbler capacity of foreman—soon filled the vacancies. Sampson used to call it fighting the Philistines, and setting the men to make brick without straw: and, truth to say, it is surprising what hard and bitter bondage the lives of workmen may be made by a bad master, without having recourse to the rod of the taskmaster and beating with stripes.

But there was one man of whom Sampson could not get rid, though he liked him least of all—for he was a staunch friend of Frank's; and though a quiet, almost morose man, he was always ready to do anything for the young master. He would dig him worms, make him fishing-rods or boats, cut him sticks, fashion cricket-bats—in fact, do anything in reason, and do it ingeniously and well. Mark Woodston had been an old and

valued servant of Mr. Henderson; the fidelity he had shown towards the father was at his death transferred to the son: and many a time when the new master was speaking harshly to Frank, Woodston's eyes would flash, and if he had dared, he would have boldly taken the youth's part against his oppressor.

Now, in spite of all Sampson's ill-usage, Mark would not go. Many a time he had been made to wince with abuse, but the man bore every taunt and ill-humoured remark with the greatest of forbearance and patience. Mark was a better-class labourer, and having known Frank from a child, he had formed a strong attachment to the boy, as well as to Mrs. Elton, and he soon showed by his actions that it would require something very strong indeed to drive him away from the old place. He lived at the off-hand farm-house, where he had been accustomed, in Mr. Henderson's time, to act more as foreman than labourer. But now he was so treated that it was hard work to bear the ill-usage, and often and often he would

go home to his invalid wife with the veins in his forehead swelled out almost to bursting, and his countenance black with suppressed passion; but the sight of Frank or Mrs. Elton used somehow to act like oil upon the troubled waters of his life, and he soon calmed down again, and went on as if nothing had happened, greatly to Sampson's surprise and disgust; for after a scene, the master would watch the tortured man, as he went off smarting with the pain of his wounds, and smile, and chuckle, and mutter to himself—

"He'll go after that."

But he did not; and months rolled on, while Frank and Stephen Vaughan took every opportunity that presented itself to get down to the little farm and go about with Mark, who had heard from Sampson times out of number that he was not worth his salt; but he plodded wearily on, as if with the stern determination not to leave his situation, and his master now began to see that if he wanted him to go, he must use very strong means indeed.

"Hooray!" cried Frank, one morning, during the midsummer holidays. "Hooray, Steve! hay-making—come on!" And with a whoop and a run, the boys were off down in the pleasant meadow, through which, laughing, dimpling, and sparkling, ran the river—now winding and curving, now straight, now doubling back almost over the same ground; while on either side lay the long swathes of newly-cut grass, save where the brown scented hay was piled up.

"Come on!" cried Frank; "there's Mark, and he'll lend us the two little forks, and we'll have such a turn at the hay, and then a ride on the top of the waggon, for I heard *him* say they were going to carry to-day."

"But old Mildew won't let you," said Stephen Vaughan; "he'd soon stop that."

"But he's going to Edgeton market," cried Frank, "and won't be here. I say, Mark, where's the waggon—ain't you going to carry to-day?"

"Not to-day, Master Frank," said Mark; "the

hay's too green. You want a ride, I s'pose, and you'll have to wait till to-morrow."

"Hallo, here!" cried Sampson, appearing from behind the hedge; "where's the waggon, you sir? I said this hay was to be carried. What's the reason it isn't begun?"

"Wouldn't do to carry it to-day, sir," said Mark, respectfully; "it's too green yet."

"What?" said Sampson, savagely.

"It would heat and take fire, sir," said Mark; "it's quite damp yet."

"How dare you interfere with my orders, sir?" roared Sampson. "Be off out of the field, you idle vagabond, and get the team here directly. A pretty thing, indeed, that one can't do as one likes on one's own land."

Mark made some unlucky reply, of which all that Sampson caught was the pith—namely, that old master would not have been so foolish. When, enraged at being opposed before his other men, and at seeing Frank and Stephen tittering, he allowed his passion to get the better of his judg-

ment, and raising the thistle-spud he held in his hand, he struck Mark a heavy blow across the forehead.

The man staggered and fell, as the blood spurted from his left temple. He rose, however, in a moment, and wiped the blood from his face, turned towards Sampson, and was about to shake his bloody fist at him, but he caught sight of Frank, and stopped in the act—ran up to the boy, grasped his hand for a moment, and then hurried out of the field.

The boys had no hay-making that day, for they made the best of their way down to the Hall, glad to be beyond the reach of the miller; and Stephen soon related the history of the morning's adventure to the squire; while before many more days had passed, Sampson Elton was gazing very ruefully at his burning haystack, which was a very large one; and the worst of it was, he had put off insuring it till the next market-day.

"I tell you what it is," said Sampson, at break-

fast next morning, "that scoundrel, Woodston, set the stack on fire."

"Oh, my dear!" said Mrs. Elton, "you don't think so, do you?"

"Yes, I do," said Sampson; "he did it out of spite."

"No, he didn't," said Frank. "It caught fire through being wet."

"How do you know, sir?" said Sampson, scowling.

"Why, Mark said it would; and I heard Squire Vaughan say so, too, when he was talking about it."

Sampson did not say anything, but he looked very vicious, and went about that day dropping hints to different neighbours that he thought Mark Woodston had fired the stack; but they only shook their heads, and said, "Pooh — pooh!" and when alone, and they discussed the matter, they said that any noodle would have known what would happen to the hay, stacking it in such a green state—it was sure to catch fire, sooner or later. And then, as a matter

of course, when so grave a charge was brought against a man, the police thoroughly investigated the matter, and Inspector Raynard came over from Edgeton to see Sampson; but he only shook his head on hearing all about the case.

"You must excuse me, Mr. Elton," he said, "for I don't want to cast any reflections upon your farming, but there was no spite here, for the man warned you, and got himself discharged for trying to save your hay. I'll take him, if you like; but if you cannot prove all this, you will cut a bad figure, and you may take my word for it, the Edgeton magistrates won't listen to this unsupported charge in the face of such evidence as can be produced on the other side. And, besides, you'll excuse me, sir, there's something unpleasant about an assault, or blow, isn't there? At least, that's what I hear. Now, take my advice, sir: spread those ashes over your turnip-field, and look after your second hay crop."

"Humph!" said Sampson, and then he frowned

at Frank, who was eagerly listening to the conversation.

Poor Inspector Raynard! he had had a long walk that morning, along dirty lanes, and the sun was shining down upon the earth with a glare that made the atmosphere apparently quiver. Grass, leaves, sprays, everything drooped and looked faint with heat, not omitting the Edgeton officer, as he stood there, buttoned-up to the chin, in his tight uniform-coat, talking to Sampson Elton and wiping the perspiration from off his shining bald forehead. Glad would he have been of a little refreshment, for he had tramped round fields and across meadows, to the off-hand farmstead, with Sampson, where he had seen everything in connection with the late fire. But now, as they stood in front of the cottage, the miller made no offer of either "bit or sup." Mr. Raynard had gone upon the wrong tack, and quite in opposition to Sampson Elton's desire, or else in the best parlour there was ready and waiting a capital dinner to which he would have been invited—to wit, a

pair of ducklings, own brother and sister of the snowy-white, yellow-billed birds that sat pruning their soft feathers by the mill-dam; the first fruits of the marrow-fats, scented most fragrantly with fresh mint—great green fellows that would roll over your tongue and melt in your mouth like a rainbow, as I once heard some one say—none of your hard, bitter, dry field-peas, but glorious, tender, juicy, marrowy marrow-fats, just the sort of peas that you never get in town. Then there was a raspberry and red-currant tart; yellow custard, made with milk from the soft, mousy-looking, dapply Alderney cows, that were whisking their tails amongst the rich grass in the meadows, and eggs laid by the great fat, dowdy-looking Dorking hens; a glass of capital sherry; and the whole to conclude with a piece of old Stilton cheese, a crusty, home-baked loaf, and a glass of foaming, sparkling, amber-hued, home-brewed ale — for Sampson did not believe in desserts: and all this spread on the whitest of white damask cloths, in a cool, shady room, on a

hot day, when the open sash let in the sweet scent of the roses and climbing flowers around the window. But all was tabooed, as far as regarded the inspector, for Sampson said, very frigidly,—

"Very well, Mr. Raynard, I suppose you know best."

And then he turned his back, and went into the house, directly after calling in Frank, who had lingered behind.

"Why, what a dreadfully inhospitable old scarecrow!" muttered the inspector, as he moved off. "To fetch me all this way upon his wild-goose chase, and then to serve me like that. Phew—how hot it is! I wish I hadn't walked. I'm as hollow as a drum."

But there was no help for it; so the representative of the law trudged down the dusty lane, where the chalky road dazzled his eyes, and where, down between the high hedges, there was not a breath of air stirring, while the sun's rays flashed up again from the parched earth.

"Confound it! how hungry I am, and how hot!" muttered Mr. Raynard; and then he unbuttoned his stiff uniform-coat, and broke a twig from the hedge to keep away the flies, for they were buzzing about as if anxious to make a meal off the tired traveller. "Confound it all, and here's some one coming in a gig, and shuffling all the dust up, as if it wasn't bad enough already! No one ever comes your way when you want a lift. Phew! how I hate walking this weather!"

"Hillo-o-o-o-o!" sung out the driver of the gig, pulling short up, close to the inspector. "You here, eh? Who's been killed, or robbed, or assaulted, eh? What's the matter?" And then the speaker, who was none other than Squire Vaughan, took off his white hat, nursed it upon his knees, and began to perform the same operation upon his head and face as the inspector was engaged in—namely, dabbing with a pocket-handkerchief. "Hot, isn't it?" he continued, without waiting for an answer to his previous questions. "Bound to say I know what you've

been after: serving a summons on old Elton for breaking that poor fellow's head, eh?"

"Wrong, sir," said Mr. Raynard. "Mr. Elton thought the burning of that stack was a case of wilful firing; but I told him he was——"

"An old noodle," said Mr. Vaughan, interrupting the speaker. Then he shouted—"I haven't patience——"

And the rest of the sentence was lost, for, flicking his horse with the whip, he drove off; but before he had gone thirty yards, he pulled up short again, and, turning round in the chaise, he roared back,—

"Hi—Raynard! did he bring out the wine?"

The inspector shook his head.

"The ale?"

Another negative movement from the inspector.

"What, nothing at all?"

Mr. Raynard gave his head such a fierce shake this time, that the buckle of his stiff stock screwed quite round to the front, and had to be

tugged back to its proper position in the nape of his neck.

"Here, jump in, man," cried the squire; "just like the old curmudgeon. Look alive, for I'm hungry: it's past two o'clock, and I like early dinners. Incendiarism!" he continued, as the horse trotted off, and the dust flew in clouds behind them—"incendiarism! why, the man's mad! Any ploughboy could have told him different."

"You're quite right, sir," said the inspector; "but then duty's duty; and when we receive information of anything of this kind, why, we have to investigate it, and get to the truth somehow."

"From the bottom of a well, eh?" said the Squire, trying to flick a fly off his horse's ear.

"Just so," said Mr. Raynard, smiling.

"I say," said the Squire, "I suppose I should have had it the other day, if you law folks had known. I caught two scoundrels stealing the partridges' eggs. They had got about thirty, when I came up, and made them disgorge; and

then I gave them such a thrashing with the riding-whip I had in my hand. I was on the cob pony, and one rascal nearly dragged me off two or three times over. How he roared for mercy! They neither of them dared run, for I had Cæsar, the big yard-dog, with me, and he would have pulled either of them down in a minute. They knew that well enough, and stood still and let me thrash them; and I did it well, too, for I don't like imprisonment, or anything of that sort. They danced about and broke all the eggs, though; but I don't think they'll come again—ha, ha, ha!" 'and the old gentleman laughed merrily.

About an hour afterwards, Mr. Raynard walked down to the Red Lion inn, at Waveley, in a much more comfortable state of mind and body. He seemed at peace with mankind in general, and only looked suspiciously at two tramps he encountered upon the road. But on passing the second man, so great was the force of habit, that

he was obliged to turn round, after walking a hundred yards or so, and call to the dust-powdered and ragged object to stop; but the poor fellow did not appear to hear the summons, for he shuffled on; so Mr. Raynard stood and watched him, till he had turned a corner in the lane, when he smiled benignly, and continued his walk to the Waveley Inn, where he engaged a conveyance and drove comfortably home.

## CHAPTER III.

### OUR PARSON.

It might have been supposed that the feverish symptoms supervening, proceeded from cold consequent upon the wetting during the return from the water-trip; but they did not, although it looked suspicious to see Alice tossing her head from side to side of her pillow; Madeline, tearful-eyed and flush-cheeked, passing a sleepless night; and both Frank Henderson and Stephen Vaughan "doing" no end of pipes, to try and calm the fretful nerves which laughed the potent fumes of nicotine to scorn.

Poor Madeline passed a sad sleepless night, and upon rising early and opening her window to admit the sweet, fresh morning breeze, laden as it was with the perfume of the refreshed earth, her first glance was at the old church and its

thickly-strewed graveyard, separated only by a high hedge from the rectory garden; and, close as it was, the Rector had never thought its proximity a drawback, in spite of the talk made respecting cemeteries and extramural interments. In his quiet, serious way, he looked upon the churchyard as only another part of his garden—the ground where seed was sown in corruption, to be raised in incorruption. But the soil was not often disturbed; though whenever the sexton delved, some one well-known was laid there—for the names upon grave-stone and tablet were generally very familiar throughout the place.

So Madeline's first glance was at the church, and the next towards the garden, where, as she had expected, was the Rector himself, busy as one of the bees, so hard at work, rifling the yellow blossoms of his cucumbers, where the frames were open for the admission of light and air. She stood there, watching him with pleasure—and it was pleasant to watch the Rector in his garden. He scorned gloves, and there, with

his silvery hair, darkened a little with perspiration, his face beaming with mingled heat and enjoyment—there he was, in one of his oldest black coats, hoeing, weeding, or watering some bed, or in other way carefully attending to the culture of the fruit, flowers, and vegetables, which so frequently took prizes at the Edgeton Horticultural Fêtes.

But then his was a glorious old garden, even though it would have made a Scotch gardener, with ribbon proclivities, hold up his hands in sheer disgust. You could lose yourself there in the various paths and alleys; and when lost, you felt no disposition to find yourself again—that is to say, anywhere else. The borders were rich with old-fashioned country flowers, and the air was redolent with the perfume from pinks, carnations, wallflowers, and scores of other simple plants in profusion, but all cultivated to the highest pitch. It was not by newly-discovered flowers, nor by fresh seedlings, that Parson Glebeley gained his prizes, but by the perfection of the older kinds.

He had no formal line drawn between flower, and kitchen, or fruit garden, but Plenty seemed to have run riot, and scattered the contents of her cornucopia in all directions. Along the backs of the flower-borders ran noble old espalier apples, forming a sturdy hedge of green leaves, and green, yellow, red or golden-russet fruit. Pears, too, dangling from the horizontal boughs—here pale green, and there blushing and embrowned with the kisses of the ardent sun; walnut-like gooseberries; grape-like currants; cool, scarlet strawberries, peeping from out their leafy bed; peaches, nectarines, and apricots; plums tinged with a pearly, violet down, or hanging in great golden drops from the gum-exuding branches; greengages, and big, black, blood-blown cherries, pendant one and all from the crumbling, old, red-brick wall—a perfect confusion of temptations. Every path displayed new riches: peas bursting their pods, and looking like boys whose clothes were too tight for them; beans climbing in bowers and blushing with their gay, scarlet blossoms;

cabbages and cauliflowers of the greenest and best; herbs whose fragrance whispered of clever culinary preparations; asparagus thrusting forth great, fat, green and purple heads from the trim bed; while under the great yew-hedge, and fully facing the south, was the hive-stand, heavy with its sweet-laden burdens, from whose straw-portals hung late clusters of emigrant bees.

The Reverend Charles Glebeley preached loudly against pride; but how he nourished and cherished it in his own heart! Proud was he of his garden and its abundance. It was his hobby; and with his child near him, in one of the rustic seats, he seemed to have all he loved around, and looked the contentment of his heart. Proud of his garden was the parson, and hard did he work in it. Weeds?—it seemed as if the whole of the tribes of million-seeding nuisances knew of the penalty attached to trespassers, and fled at the sight of the Rector and his gardener, for scarcely one was to be seen. They were not to be tempted by the rich soil to grow up swift and rank, and

all on purpose to be dragged up by the roots, with not a scrap left behind to put forth a future shoot. No; the weeds knew better, and sought a poorer but more hospitable soil.

But the Rector had a hard time of it with his garden: all those luscious fruits and marrowy vegetables cost him no end of trouble and anxiety, for he was surrounded by deadly enemies. The birds acted so treacherously, that he vowed he would commence shooting and exterminate them. As for the sparrows, that lived in the ivy-covered church-tower—a large colony, who stuffed every coigne of vantage with their ragged hay and straw nests, and brought up large broods of ugly, callow, yellow-billed sparrowkins—they were the worst enemies the parson had. But he respected the sparrows, for they were open in their dealings: they were brazen, but withal honest sort of thieves. They did not come into the garden, dropping down one by one upon the newly-sown beds, and professing to be after slug, grub, or wireworm, or looking for snails; they came boldly

down in flocks to rob, and rob they did in full earnest: punching up the sprouting peas from the ground, picking up every atom of radish-seed, while, as to onions or young brocoli, they would draw the tender young shoot from the earth, and after eating the attached seed, gently lay the thread down again. If the weather were dry, they would finish off with a dust-bath, twirling round and round and flapping their wings till they had formed little craters in the smooth beds, and then, evidently considering they had been clever horticulturists, fly off, crying "Chiswick—Chiswick," to their ivy sanctuary.

Then there were the blackbirds and thrushes, who, in return for being allowed to rear their young in peace, used to hop along between the beds, ostensibly snail-seeking; but every now and then, dig, dig, went their beaks into some fine strawberry, or else, beneath the wall, poke into the ripe hanging fruit. As for wasps in the plum season, the wall used to be alive with them, and the bottles of sugar-and-water, hung up as traps,

were nearly always full of sticky unfortunates—each vessel a perfect mortuary, but, for all that, heedless of insecticidal contrivances, the survivors were continually cutting and carving away at nectarine, peach, or plum, while, as to the apricots and greengages, the only wonder was that there should be any left, for those insidious marauders, the ants.

"No weeds!" said the Rector, in answer to a remark made by Madeline. "Well, no, not many; but it's hard work to keep them out. Ah!" he continued, "it's a beautiful arrangement of nature by which seeds are wafted about from place to place, so as to drop miles away from the parent stem—it's a beautiful arrangement; but though I get plenty of weeds in that way, I never find any first-class flowers or vegetables come to fill my beds."

Then as Madeline, who had descended, stood looking on, the Rector disappeared, all but his coat-tails, in one of the frames, where a great deal of nipping, pegging, and laying down seemed

to be always required. When at last he did show his face, it was red-hot, while his right ear was scarlet from the rubbing it had received. For several little horticultural difficulties had been discovered that morning. The ants had been at the apricots, having wriggled through the muslin, and attacked those intended for show; the big pet grub and fly destroyer had fallen into the well, where, being a toad, and a good swimmer, he looked very cool and comfortable, and after half an hour's trying with the bucket, refused to be fished out, and so had to be left to his fate; the worms, which came out after the previous night's shower, had drawn all the newly-planted-out lettuces into their holes; while the snails, which the Rector thought to have been exterminated, had been busy at work amongst the late strawberries.

In consequence of all these little unpleasantries the Rector's ear had been rubbed red, and his face wore a comical expression of worry and annoyance.

"'Note K' in pencil—my own mark, as I always used to note obscure passages. Turn to the leaves at the end. There you are, you see, all explained ready for you."

Frank said, "Thank you," and turned the conversation by inquiring about some of the gardening matters; then, seeing no further chance of a glimpse of Madeline, he took his leave; but only to meet Stephen Vaughan in the lane, when the young men—though each was most anxious to avoid the other—felt that there was no excuse for distant behaviour, and so tried to hide the constraint which hung about them.

Stephen half shuddered as he remembered the thoughts which came into his head upon the previous night, and even felt disposed to ask himself whether, for the moment, he had not been mad; while Frank knew that he had his old friend to thank for saving his life, so he could not afford to show any ill-feeling—consequently, the young men strolled together towards the old Hall, but had not reached the turning, before

they encountered the evil-looking face which had looked out of the mill window, and so bitterly cursed the half-drowned man; but upon this occasion there was also the body visible—a body which conveyed the ill-looking face by them almost without a salute; in fact, it would have been better if it had, for the surly nod spoke of anything but goodwill towards those saluted.

"'Pon my word, Frank, I don't wonder at the governor regularly hating the sight of your respected parent," said Stephen.

"Parent," echoed Frank. "Come, I don't acknowledge that: he may be my mother's husband, but I can't stand anything nearer. But I tell you what—he's off to market; so I shall go home for a good hour or two's reading.

## CHAPTER IV.

### TAKING TO TASK.

Soon after parting from his old schoolfellow, Frank Henderson was sitting opposite to his mother at the mill-cottage, deep in a scholastic tome, whose contents it was absolutely necessary that he should transfer to his head. Mrs. Elton was busy rounding the heel of a stocking, her needles click-clicking away, as from time to time she glanced with all a mother's pride at her big, well-grown son, "a much nicer looking lad than Mrs. Vaughan's," as she often told herself. But then Mrs. Elton was only a little worse than mothers in general, and could not help feeling so much admiration for her offspring.

Now Mrs. Elton was really a very good sort of woman, even if she had certain weaknesses, not the least of which was a want of tone in the

muscles controlling her organs of speech, especially that frail member, the tongue. She was naturally a speaker: not that she was in any way gifted in an oratorical sense, or able to indulge in lofty flights of rhetoric. Quite the contrary: her gift of speech was rapid, and that was its only strong point. Her ideas were not striking in originality, or vividness of conception; but she seemed to possess a mind easily fathomed, and at the end of twenty-four hours gave a stranger the idea that he knew all there was to know in Mrs. Sampson Elton. Poor, weak, amiable woman, she was as shallow and unworldly as her lord was profound and mundane; but then her nature, with all its shallowness, was rich in the milk of human kindness, a milk that bore upon its surface the thickest of cream; while in the profundity of the depth of her husband there was a sediment which, when stirred up, was nasty of the nastiest.

Frank had a good read that morning, then grew unsettled, and had a walk in the after-

noon, and again was seated opposite Mrs. Elton, grinding away when the evening was closing in, and the good dame was beginning to fidget lest her boy's eyes should be strained with reading by so bad a light. But there was something else made Mrs. Elton fidget: she had a great objection to preserving silence for so long a time; but she could not venture to interfere with her son's researches in the Greek author before him. So the dame fidgetted, for she was dying to have a long talk with the student before the head of the family should come in from market.

At last Mrs. Elton hazarded a remark respecting candles and eyesight; and the remark had its effect, for it came at an opportune time, when the reader was battling with disinclination, and wanting a plausible excuse for giving up the day's studies. So in reply to Mrs. Elton's "Shall I ring for candles, my dear?" Frank closed his book, and drawing his chair closer to the open window, proposed one pipe before Mary illuminated the room.

"There, Mums," he said, "now we'll play, and give Jack a holiday."

"Ah! do, dear," said the anxious mother. "I'm sure you are reading too hard. You looked quite pale this morning."

"Nonsense," said Frank, lighting a formidable meerschaum, with bile written in its every curve.

"No, dear, it isn't nonsense," said Mrs. Elton; "and I'm sure you are trying too much. I don't want you to take degrees or anything of the kind if they can't be managed without making you ill. But I say, Frank, dear."

"Well, Mums," said Frank.

"I want to talk to you, dear," not at all a novel desire upon the good dame's part.

"Then you've a capital chance while this pipe lasts," said Frank; "and then, I promise you, I shall want supper."

"Well, dear," said Mrs. Elton, "I wanted to say a few words to you—that is, to talk to you about—about——"

Glebeley? He is a fine likely young fellow, and——"

"*Don't*, DON'T, my dear," exclaimed Mrs. Elton, now quite whimpering. "How can you talk in that way, when you know all the time you are at college she comes and sits with me hour after hour talking about you, and listening to your letters when I read them, and——"

"Why, you don't mean to say that you ever let her see my letters!" shouted Frank.

"Oh, yes, my dear," said his mother, with dignity. "Oh, yes, always; and she always helps me to write to you again; for really, dear, I never know what to say, it is so tiresome writing to anybody. I'd rather talk at any time."

Poor Madeline! her cheeks must have been tingling at this time, if there is any credence to be placed in magnetic influence. And then for a while Frank sat and mused, and remained for some time silent; for, without being vain, his ideas accorded well with those of his mother, and her thoughts and aspirations touching

Madeline Glebeley all lay upon the surface. Frank could not but think that, in spite of certain distant ways that had grown upon his old playmate of late, he could not but think that his suit would be received with favour; and allowing that such was the case, and his mother right, the interposition of a third party seemed certainly very unnecessary. No words of love had ever yet passed, while Madeline's behaviour had been nothing more than might have been expected from their early associations. But Mrs. Elton's words, and the events of the previous day, brought up a whole flood of recollections, upon which he was borne far away from the present, and far off into the future.

"You see, dear," said Mrs. Elton, breaking in upon his musing, "Mrs. Vaughan is a nice, good soul, and for your poor dear father's sake I shall always respect John Vaughan; but then I don't see why I should let my plans give way to theirs, and I know they have been putting that and that together nicely."

But Frank was in a deep musing fit, and could not answer. He was just feeling that he should like to be at rest upon the point at issue. It would be sweet indeed to be loved by the dark-eyed girl; but then might she not really already prefer his companion? Had she not been most distant of late? And then her father—what would he say?"

Here he came to a full stop, for the figure of the Rector, his old guardian, completely stopped the way, and was not easily to be overcome. "What would he say?" was rather a serious question, and one which the proposer could not answer. Love is very sweet at two-and-twenty, but then at the same age suspense is as bitter. However, the thinker determined to watch his opportunity and know his fate, and that, too, right soon; when, in spite of old friendship, if he were favoured, Stephen must give way, and his envious, sour looks would not be esteemed a jot.

On arriving at this point Frank relit his pipe,

while all further conversation upon the subject was stayed by the entrance of Sampson Elton.

Now, just about the time of the conversation at the cottage, Alice Vaughan had worked her brother up into the embrasure of the old window in the Hall drawing-room, ostensibly for the purpose of holding a skein of silk with which she was about to put in the eyes of a most noblybeaked parrot of gorgeous hue, at present reposing, stretched out upon a tambour frame, and totally blind.

"Now, look sharp!" said Colossus to Pigmy. "I'm not going to hold my hands stretched out like this long: I want a pipe. There's the governor under the cedar."

"I won't be long, Steve, dear," said Pigmy the Pretty, coiling a flossy yellow silk band round her brother's hands, and securing him, until she felt disposed to loosen his chains. "Now, hold quite still, there's a good boy; this silk so soon gets entangled."

Stephen very good humouredly leaned back in his chair and "held still," while a piece of square card being produced, his sister found the end, and began to wind her silk. All this while the room was beginning to grow dusky; and Mrs. Vaughan, having laid aside her book, was half napping in an easy-chair.

"Dear me," said Alice; "why, we shall hardly see to finish."

"Good job too," said Stephen, yawning. "Come, leave it till the candles are lit."

"Oh! we must finish this skein," said Alice, "or we shall have it in a tangle;" and then the busy taper little fingers began to be very nimble, unfastening knots and kinks, and pretending to do a great deal, but really making but very little progress.

"I say, Steve, dear," said Pigmy, at last, in the most saccharine of tones—"I say, dear, what was that you said to Maddy yesterday?"

"Hold your tongue, you little fool," said Stephen, abruptly, looking anxiously round at

his mother, and nearly ruining the yellow skein.

"How stupid!" exclaimed Alice, impatiently, pushing her brother's hands back into the proper position. "Now, tell me directly, sir; I will know. What was it you were saying to Maddy Glebeley? I am your sister, and I ought to be told. Now, what was it, Stevey?"

"Nothing," said Stephen.

"If you don't tell me," said Alice, in a threatening tone, "I'll ask you, out loud, at supper to-night, before papa and mamma;" and after this dire threat, the silk-winding came quite to a standstill.

"No, you won't," said Stephen, coolly.

"Indeed, but I will, sir," said his sister.

"There, I don't care," said Stephen. "Now, come, get on with this silk, or else I shall throw it all down together."

"Well, then," said Alice, "if you will not tell me, I'll tell you, sir, for I know all about it. You were making love to her, sir—now, then.

Now, Steve, it's of no use for you to throw your great feet about like that, and try to tear my dress. Sit still, sir, and listen to me. Now, I know you proposed to her; and she refused you. Don't—be—so—stupid! See how you are tangling this silk again."

Stephen grumbled audibly, and then the silk-winding went on once more, very slowly, and so did Alice's speech.

"Now, I know how it is, Steve: it's all because of Frank Henderson. But if I were you, I would not be beaten like that."

Stephen here grew a little less restive, and gave a great sigh.

"There; I knew I was right," continued Pigmy. "Now, sit still, like a good boy, for I want to talk to you, and say ever so much about all that, you know; only you are such an old stupid, and will keep fidgeting about so. Now, Steve, tell me directly, sir—was I not right? and didn't you tell Madeline last night that you were——"

"The devil!" ejaculated Stephen, throwing the silk into his sister's lap, and then retreating across the lawn towards where the Squire was sitting, and where the little tormentor soon saw him hard at work fumigating the cedar branches with tobacco smoke.

"I know he did," said Alice, nodding her head and muttering to herself. "I know he did; and she refused him—a nasty, tiresome, deceitful thing. And him so tall, and so handsome, and so—so—so big; and so—so—so stupid!" she burst out at last. "Ah, if I were a man, I wouldn't be beaten like that. And it might all be so nicely settled, too; and then by-and-by they could both come and live here; and then, if I wished it, Frank could go into the Church, and I dare say we could have the rectory. It does all fit so nicely. I'm sure I'm better looking than Madeline; and yet he was in a fidget all the time to get away, and it does make me feel *so* miserable."

Well, it certainly was getting dark, and no one

saw Alice's little cheek lean up against the side of the window shutter, and rest there so disconsolately; nor yet the handkerchief come out, in time to catch the two little glistening tears which fell upon it. There was no Frank there to kiss them away, and he might easily have done so, for Mrs. Vaughan's nap was sound. But, even if Frank had been there, one feels grave doubts as to whether he would have attempted the duty of removal; while, even if he had, without doubt it would have been in the more effectual, but less romantic, fashion of wiping with the little pocket handkerchief.

"I hate him, I do," exclaimed Alice, at length, in a pet; "and I won't think about him any more;" and then the little maiden went to the piano, and tried to sing, but the notes would come so mournfully, and everything sounded so sad, that she soon gave that up in despair, and, tying a handkerchief over her bonny little head, she sauntered out into the garden, through the open window. Here she was soon busy picking

the roses and pulling out the petals to scatter about the lawn, till she came round to where she expected to find the Squire and her brother; but, upon reaching the large garden seat, she found that Stephen was alone, when he directly made room for her beside him.

Alice sat down listlessly; and no sooner was she seated than her brother took hold of her little white hands, and imprisoned them within his own.

"Well, Tartar," said Stephen, after a short silence, during which he had been busy sending clouds on high.

"For shame, Steve," said Alice.

"Well, you know what a little vixen you are," said Stephen; "I'm quite frightened of you."

"Oh!" exclaimed Alice, passionately, "I wish you wouldn't be such a goose;" and then she rose to go, but found herself a prisoner.

"Sit still, little one," said Stephen; "I want to talk to you, you know, about yesterday."

"There's a good boy," said Alice. "Now, do let's have a little quiet chat about it."

"Well," said Stephen, "let's begin. What a nice fellow Frank Henderson is, isn't he?"

"No," said Alice, hurriedly, and half startled at the contrary road the conversation was taking —"No; I hate him."

"No you don't, Titsy," said Steve, "or else you would not have been fit to cry when he laughed at you in the boat. Now, come, little birdie, it's my turn now. I'm the stronger, and I shan't let you go; come, now, sit still. I'm stupid, I know; but then I have eyes. And so you're very fond of Frank, are you?"

"I'm sure I'm not; I hate him, I tell you," exclaimed Alice, passionately.

"Just so," said Stephen, coolly; "and so you hang upon his arm, and look up in his face, and like to linger with him under the trees. That's just what people do who hate one another."

"I tell you I do hate him," cried Alice, stamping her little foot, and struggling in vain to free

herself. "It's very, *very*, VERY cruel of you to tease me so, Steve; and—and—and I—I——" And poor little Alice burst into a passionate fit of weeping, sobbing so violently that her brother grew alarmed.

"Hush! hush! poor little birdie," he said, in his great elephantine manner, but with all a woman's gentleness, as he drew the little dew-wet flower to his breast, and kissed and fondled her till the sobs ceased, and the eyes grew dry as she nestled up against her stalwart brother, and returned his caresses.

So they sat in silence for some time, watching the great broad-faced moon rise slowly from behind the trees, silvering all around, but as yet leaving the place where they sat in complete shade.

All at once Alice started, for something like a rain-drop fell upon her hand. She made no further movement, however, but only pressed the tighter to her brother.

"Titsy," said Stephen, at last, in a very soft voice; "my poor little girl!"

"Poor Stevey," whispered Alice, nestling closer still.

"Supper!" roared the bluff-voiced Squire, from an open window. "Come, you two," said the old gentleman, as the thoughtful couple entered the room. "What have you been doing?"

"Only talking about yesterday's trip, papa," said Alice—the more self-possessed of the two.

"Well, now, that is provoking," cried the Squire; "I get you two in, and now your mother steps off; and—— Oh! here she is."

"I was obliged to give orders, my dear," said comely Mrs. Vaughan, "or we should have had Mr. Phipps put in a damp bed to-morrow."

"Nice boy, very," said the Squire. "Coming to-morrow, is he? Nice row we shall have. Poor little beggar, though; do him good after being styed up in London. Have something to eat for the poor little chap."

## CHAPTER V.

### A MORSEL OF MYSTERY.

FRANK sat that night by his open window listening to the faint indescribable sounds borne on the soft breeze of midnight. He felt sleepless and disturbed in his mind, to settle which disarrangement he came to the determination that he would quietly and calmly think matters over, and this he tried to do every half-hour, and finished by making everything far more chaotic. He wanted to see the road before him clear, and his course straightforward; but, somehow or another, he could not get it as he wished, in spite of pipe after pipe, and the attacking of the knotty subject from different sides. If there had been no Stephen Vaughan to keep getting in the way, all would have been tolerably easy; but do what he would, there was his old schoolfellow planting himself as

an obstacle, and apparently ready to dispute the way.

Once Frank started, for it seemed that he heard a door close in the lower part of the building; but he detected no further sound, so continued musing, when he was again startled by hearing voices in the lane, apparently close at hand.

At first the conversation was carried on in a whisper; but soon the voices were raised, and it seemed evident that the speakers were in dispute, for Frank heard some one say, angrily,

"'Taint half enew, I tell you."

"Hsh-sh-sh!" said another. "We shall be overheard."

"Well, and suppose we are?" said the first speaker. "I don't care; it can't hurt me."

"Hush! I tell you," whispered a familiar voice. "Haven't I——"

"No, you haven't!" exclaimed the other, loudly and angrily; and then Frank leaped to his feet, for there was the sound of a blow, and then

a sharp scuffling noise, followed by a half-stifled cry for help.

The window was not high; and the next moment Frank had lowered himself down into the garden, leaped the hedge, and was about to join in the affray, when one of the figures, indistinctly seen in the starlight, seemed suddenly to wrench itself from the other, stand for an instant, and then strike a violent blow, when Frank rushed in, just time enough to catch a man tottering from a stroke apparently heavy enough to have felled a bullock.

To lay the poor fellow upon the ground was the work of a moment, and then Frank darted off in pursuit of the retreating figure, whose steps he could hear rapidly beating the hard road; but, as soon as the fellow made the discovery that he was being pursued, he rushed through the hedge and took to the fields, then, with his pursuer hotly in chase, made for a low copse about a couple of hundred yards further on; but Frank was fleet of foot, and getting warm with the

excitement, though he had not stayed to ask himself why he was trying to make a capture, so he bounded on, and as the dim figure dashed into the sparse underwood, it was with his pursuer close behind him. He had evidently meant this as a place of sanctuary, but there was no rest here; and directly after, at a much slower pace, pursuer and pursued were again out in the open, and making their way across the meadows towards the river.

"I shall have him now," muttered Frank, breathlessly. "I shall soon know him if I get close up."

But just then the figure made a double on finding itself in a curve of the river, and tried to dart back; but Frank, though breathed, was too quick for him, and had him by the arm, but only for an instant, for there was a sharp struggle, followed by a heavy fall and a splash, when Frank slowly gathered himself up to see his late adversary crawling out of the river on the far side, when he plunged into the darkness, and was gone.

"What a fool I am!" muttered Frank, as he turned slowly away in the direction of the cottage. "But then that surely was Elton in difficulties; what in the world though could he have been doing out there with this fellow?"

He could find plenty of similar questions, but no answers for them. However, the sharp run and the excitement had done him good; and if he could have had the satisfaction of leading back a prisoner, Frank would have been on very comfortable terms with himself. But then he had been overthrown; and therefore it was not with feelings of the most unalloyed pleasure that he returned to the lane to aid the fallen man.

However there was no help needed. The fallen man was gone; and Frank walked round to the back of the cottage, and tried the door.

Fast!

He then went round to the front, but that was also secured, and further inspection showed no sign of light or moving inmate; so he went to an outhouse, and secured the assistance of a

short ladder, with which he reached his bedroom, and then drew up the light steps after him.

"It's strange," muttered Frank to himself, as he returned from listening at his bedroom door. "And yet I could not have made a mistake. It must have been Elton. It was his voice too. Proved by eyes and ears."

But as all his musing seemed only to mystify him further, Frank began to think of bed, but determined to have one more pipe to settle him after the late run; so he sat down again by the window, and once more tried to make out who the parties could have been. Could it have been any friend of Sampson's? Yes, that was quite possible; but then, who were Sampson's friends? No one knew anything of him, nor yet of his antecedents,—points upon which he was always most jealously reserved. He had been now for many years in the village; but no one knew from whence he came, neither had he ever talked of his relatives.

"If he would only have kept away alto-

gether!" growled Frank, as he thought of his poor weak mother, and the life she led; of the harsh behaviour towards himself until he grew old enough to maintain his own position; and, above all, of the shadow the sour-tempered miller had cast by his presence over a happy home. Then came visions of early life and happiness, followed by much bitterness; of the times when his blood had almost boiled on witnessing the cutting treatment to which his mother was subjected; and then came again that unanswerable question—"What could she have seen in him?"

Frank could not make it out; but the solution was simple enough. Mrs. Elton had been left a widow with a large business, superintended by a keen foreman; and that keen foreman had thought how advantageous it would be to change from servant to master. It was only a matter of time and careful siege; so Sampson sat himself down before the fortress, and in due time carried it, thoroughly revenging himself afterwards for every imaginary slight of the past, and carefully

visiting upon the heads of those at home the unpleasantries he met with from the late Mr. Henderson's connections, very few of whom glanced with an eye of favour upon the miller.

Sampson presented himself at breakfast next morning with his low, black, bristle-crowned forehead embellished with a dirty greeny-yellow bump just in the front. It was evidently painful, for he had been out and about, and his hat had been fretting it. But in reply to Frank's query as to whether he was much hurt, he returned a look of the greatest surprise and wonder.

"I said I hoped you were not hurt, sir," said Frank.

"Hurt?" said Sampson,—"where?"

"Why, your forehead, sir," said Frank. "That scoun——"

"There, get on with your breakfast," growled Sampson; "and, as I don't interfere with your affairs, let mine rest. I should have thought any fool could have seen I had a bad boil coming."

The allusion to a human being given to folly was so plain, that Frank, who prided himself on certain gentlemanly feelings, retired within his shell metaphorically, and took no further notice of the head of the family, who growled over his breakfast for awhile, and then departed. But Frank thought none the less. Upon waking that morning he had felt in doubt respecting the strange affair of the past night, thinking that he might have been mistaken as to identity; but the plain mark of the heavy blow he had seen delivered, put doubt to flight at once.

"Whatever can it mean?" mused Frank. "He evidently was there, and now wants to hush it up. So strange, too. To suffer such a blow as that from a fellow to whom he was giving an interview in the middle of the night. There must be some mystery attached to it." But, somehow or another, Frank Henderson was not in a mystery-loving humour; for, do what he would, other thoughts would keep rising. He took up a book and pretended to study; he tried

to write; began a mathematical problem; it was all the same: either Madeline Glebeley or Stephen Vaughan took possession of the mental field of sight, and the advance made in anything relating to college was very small.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A DAY WITH THE SCALES.

Tom Phipps has been quoted here as an authority, but has not yet made his appearance in this life drama. He was as a man much what he had been as a boy: very small in body, and very large in soul. It was only little Tom Phipps, of Edgeton High School, magnified. To look at, Tom was one of the most comical little fellows imaginable; while the most striking piece of comicality about him, and the one which gave an irresistible tone to the whole, was the fact of his utter innocence—his complete guilelessness of there being anything amusing in his appearance. He was neither plain nor handsome; but something like what a good-looking imp might be supposed to have become, if adopted by reputable parents and properly

brought up. He stood just five feet high; was pudgy, not to say fat; possessed not a scrap of beard upon the smooth round face he so carefully shaved; had a pair of merry twinkling eyes, a little cocky nose, fair curly hair, and a temperament of the most satisfactory kind imaginable. Tom was never known to be out of humour. As a boy, when thrashed at school, which was at least once a week—for he never by any chance knew a lesson—he cried with one eye and laughed with the other; he never quarrelled or made himself unpleasant, but seemed to get on as if composed of India-rubber, so elastic that he could collapse, or stretch, or accommodate himself to any position or circumstance.

True to his appointment, Tom Phipps came down by the mail train to Ramsford, the market town, where he was met by Stephen Vaughan, who had driven over in company with Frank, both of whom worked hard all the way to seem perfectly at their ease, and each to show the other that he had nothing whatever upon his

mind, and, of course, most unsuccessfully; and at last Frank began to wish the arrangements that had been made, void and of none effect. For a fishing trip was settled for the following day; Frank was to stay a night or two at the Hall; and when they reached the station, there stood Tom, armed with a bundle of fishing-rods, strapped together like the fascine of a Roman lictor; while his other impedimenta consisted of a gaily-patterned carpet-bag, long and very shallow—whose contents were evidently cricketing tools—and a very small black valise, upon the top being strapped a railway rug composed of raccoon skins, lined with scarlet cloth. As for the traveller, he was got up in the first style of fashion—that is to say, in the ugliest suit of Tweed that Bond or Regent Street could produce.

"Hullo, my Trojans!" he shouted, shaking Frank's arm nearly off, and then seizing Stephen's hand, and shaking himself, for he made but little impression on the giant. "How

ceived, when, armed with a chamber candlestick, he encountered the trio upon the staircase; for Stephen was bearing the spirit stand; Frank carried a cigar-box, and the big leaden tobacco-holder; Tom Phipps held at arm's length the bright copper tea-kettle; while one of the maids brought up the rear with a tray containing glasses, lemons, and sugar.

"Hum!" said the Squire; "off to bed, eh?"

"Oh! we shall just have a cigar round first," said Stephen.

"How many did you say?" inquired the Squire.

"Oh! only one," said Frank. "I'll keep them in order."

"Bound to say you will," said the Squire. "Well, good night. Not *too* much noise, please."

"I say, sir, don't go," said Tom. "Just one glass with us. I'll mix for you just as you like it. Come along."

The Squire looked at Tom, then at the lemons, and then at the spirit stand and his tobacco-box. He hesitated, and was on the

point of yielding, when resolution came to his aid, and he shook his head.

"Just one," said Tom, "and half a pipe."

"Go to your father, you young tempter," shouted the Squire, rushing into his bed-room, and banging the door; but only to re-appear in an instant.

"Here, you Steve!" he shouted; "bring that tobacco-box down in the morning."

A snug chatty half-hour was spent over a glass of whisky toddy; but bed was soon sought, for they were to be up with the lark, or as soon after as was possible to gentlemen of their age and constitution; and shortly after the inmates of the hall were locked in those famed mystic arms. Frank slept, Stephen slept, and Alice slept, in spite of certain mental disarrangements; but then it must be taken into consideration that sleep had been somewhat interfered with of late; and let what passions will rule the brain for a time, the drowsy deity will have his tribute paid sooner or later.

There was a rattle and crash, like a small hailstorm, at the bedroom windows of the visitors, followed by a view-halloo, shouted in a cheery stentorian voice, which soon brought the sleepers to the casements, where they were saluted by Stephen with—

"Look alive, boys; breakfast's all ready, and I'm now going to get the baits and tackle in the car. Look spry—it's half-past six, and we may as well make a day of it."

Frank threw open his window to the widest extent, and then sighed, and thought what a pity it was that the even tenour of all our lives should be disturbed by love. It was a glorious morning, and with the burst of soft flower-scented air that rushed into the room came the sweet matin song of the birds in full chorus from the neighbouring wood.

"I say, Frank, old chap," said Tom, making his appearance, by throwing open the door of communication, where he stood framed as he played a duet upon his curly head with a pair of brushes—"I say, old chap, I envy you bumpkins

a morning like this. It's almost enough to send a fellow wild. Confound it! I wish I had got up two hours ago;" and then he went to the open window, and gazed with a town-dweller's eyes at the scene before him.

At his feet was the old-fashioned garden, teeming with flowers—not exotics, with terrific names, and looking as if it would be high treason to pick their regal beautyships, but simple old flowers, bathed in dew, which lay upon leaf and petal in exquisitely small pearly drops, glittering in the sun with iridiscent hues that would throw the richest wrought jewels in the shade. The spiders' weavings were now like tiny-jewelled chains; while every scent-laden rose was heavy with the cloying kisses Nature had bestowed during the night. Roses everywhere — white, pink, and deep blood-red. But the look-out would undoubtedly have won a word of praise from one more hard to please than Tom Phipps —the man given to "loud" shirts and pins, tobacco, and blackened meerschaum pipes.

Tom forgot his dressing, laid down his brushes, leaned out of the window, and looked down upon the quaintly cut beds, filled with pinks and carnations, from amid which shone the rich orange blossoms where the nasturtiums trailed along their pale green stems. The window was wreathed with clematis and jasmine, with here and there a tiny white rose; and at last Tom dragged himself away with a sigh, to take up his brushes again, and say to his neighbour—

"Ah! old chap; this makes me think of the old days, when we used to be rowed for getting our feet soaked in the wet grass, and for picking the flowers not according to law. Ah! Frank, I wish I was a young 'un again." Here Tom Phipps heaved a deep sigh, and stuck a very ugly fox-head pin in his blue and orange tie.

"Well, if I were you," said Frank, "I'd give up wishing for the impossible, and think of the inevitable. Now, to begin with,—suppose you look upon the necessaries of life as amongst the inevitable; and take, first, breakfast, which

necessitates dressing; and dressing, care, especially in the shaving part—which I see, though, you have done—and care, recollect, begets the nearest approach to perfection, which I know you worship."

Ten minutes after Tom was sitting at breakfast, with his mouth full of ham, made golden with new-laid egg, and eating as though a care had never crossed his mind; for Tom could eat, and he did, too, in spite of friendly jokes.

"Never mind the chaff, Tom," said Stephen, after rather a severe onslaught; "you must take in coal, or you would never keep the steam up."

"Oh, I don't mind," said Tom, in a thick voice, and in a tone which bore out his assertion. "I'll trouble you for another cup of coffee, and some more of that home-made cream. Very different stuff to our London shop cream, which they tell me is made of magnesia and gum Arabic. But, I say, you fellows haven't done, have you?"

"Done? yes!"

"Oh, very well," said Tom, coolly; "all right,

I have'nt; get the car round, and I'll be with you in a minute. Take some prog with you. What? All in, and ready long ago? Ah! well, so am I. All right!"

There was a bright little face to salute at one of the windows, as the dog-cart wheels crunched over the gravel drive; and as it was left behind Tom Phipps thought, as he rearranged his hat, that the flower at the window was, after all, the sweetest he had seen that morning; and for the space of quite five minutes he was silent and thoughtful.

Off and away, through the bright morning sunshine, with the birds springing right and left from the road as they passed. Tom grew quite excited as they saw, first a brace of partridges skimming over the hedge, and next a fine long-tailed cock pheasant scudding on before the horse for a few yards, to rise, whirring, and dart into the plantation, unharmed by the shot fired after it from a fishing-rod.

Away, by the waving corn, now in full ear, and

bending in glorious undulations to the soft passing breeze, which gave to it every tint of green as it swept over the wide expanse. Away, past the oak wood, where the jay screamed harshly, as it was frightened from its verdant fortress. Past green meadows, where the land-rail jarred its discordant notes to a far-off respondent mate. Past where the long swathes of grass lay levelled by the mower's scythe. The lark carolled on high, and a light thin mist was rising from the lowlands, and down by where the river's course was marked by the ragged stunted willow pollards; but beyond taking a good long breath now and then, and agreeing with Tom that it was a jolly morning, the friends paid but small attention to the beauties of nature.

At last the chosen spot upon the river was reached; and the car having been left at the nearest inn, the trio, basket and rod laden, and with a lad bearing a heavily packed hamper, started off for the willow-bordered stream, which glittered in the morning sun. The heavy, over-

hanging, and dipping herbage swayed in the swift current, while the water lilies gently rose and sank with the limpid swell, and formed a screen for divers wicked old chub, which lay there in wait for the unfortunate flies which, in the ephemeral innocence of their hearts—if they have any—were disporting themselves upon the surface, from which they were ever and anon snatched, like travellers passing the abode of some German baron of the good old times. Down by the rushes, Jack—the fresh-water shark—with a few weeds to cover his green back, was, with snakey eye and protruding jaw, grinning and smacking where his lips should have been at the prospect of soon securing some unwary gudgeon. Under the willows, in the bend of the stream, where the waters flowed deeply and slow, the dragon flies rustled and fought, while tiny beetles formed their geometric patterns upon the surface, undisturbed by the rapid skating of the water-spiders. Everywhere the river looked bright, tempting, and, as Tom said, "fishy," and

presented plenty of attractions for any lovers of old Izaak Walton and the gentle craft.

Here, beneath an old alder, the friends pitched, and proceeded to unlimber. Rods were fitted, lines mounted, baits chosen, and each selecting his station, the prey-laden waters were attacked, and for some time the silence remained unbroken.

Patience is proverbial amongst fishermen, and patience was well shown here, for the only breaks in the quiet were for such necessary duties as the tying on of a fresh hook, or the altering of position for the sake of getting a better cast. But after a while there was a halt, on the suggestion of the London visitor.

"I say, boys," he exclaimed, "this is dry work: hanging over the water produces a reaction in the body. The fish won't bite, but 'pon my word I will if you show me a bait."

But Tom was not as good as his word, for he directly refused the large wriggling worm Stephen dropped before his face. Then came a meeting

over the hamper, and the shrieking of a cork under the torture of the screw. "Plop," and then the "glug-glug" of a foaming bottle of ale, which was discussed, and then pipes were lit and hostilities recommenced.

There was now a pause of fully half an hour, when Tom signalled a bite, and after intense interest of some moments' duration, a gudgeon was safely landed amidst plenty of derisive laughter. As for the chub, they would not even look at the bait, but sulkily took themselves off; while the jack evidently did not mean to be caught upon that day; for though Tom's gudgeon was carefully and temptingly played about where he had been seen, Jack would not own allegiance to his master, preferring freedom in his native element.

At length, after a most laudable display of patience, exercised through a couple of hours, Stephen proposed a move.

"Let's try the Priory grounds," he said, "old Sir Peter is in town, and where the preserved water runs through the park is quite half a mile

from the house. Let's risk it. The old gentleman would give us leave, and it's ten to one either of the keepers sees us. I'll warrant good sport there."

Frank hung back for a moment, and then acquiesced. The basket was re-packed, and the boy followed with it, grinning hugely when his mouth was not engaged with the wedge of raspberry jam tart he held in his fist. A quarter of an hour brought them to the Priory Park palings, and then, after creeping through a gap, a suitable spot in the river was chosen, pipes re-primed, and the business of the day recommenced.

Stephen's warrant proved worthy; for in about a quarter of an hour Tom Phipps hooked what appeared to be a heavy carp, and a sharp struggle ensued.

"Give him line," cried Frank and Stephen together.

"Can't," cried Tom, and for a very good reason: his line would not run on account of a knot catching in one of the rings of his rod,

so he had to follow the fish as well as he could in its wild evolutions, principally up stream, where it was evidently making for some rather evil-looking lilies and stout water weeds. Then there was a sharp struggling splash in amongst the water plants; something which sounded exceedingly like an oath; and then Tom Phipps stood with one leg in the mud, his line broken, and the carp most probably returned in a very fluttered and excited condition to the bosom of its family, with the ornamentation of a Kirby hook in its mouth, and trailing away, comet fashion, some three yards of line behind.

Tom polished the fetid black mud from off his trouser and boot, fitted on a fresh line, and sitting down to re-commence, stretched out his leg in the sun to dry.

It was now getting towards mid-day, and as if to make up for previous disappointment, the fun grew fast and furious. Stephen was up to his elbows in fish slime, while Tom was in ecstacies.

"One o'clock prompt, as we say in the City,"

exclaimed the latter. "My stores require replenishing, and I see that young vampire has emptied out the hamper. After all said and done, there's nothing like country air for giving a fellow an appetite."

"Got a bite," whispered Frank, in a low tone.

"Wish I had," said Tom, going up to him, accompanied by Stephen.

Frank's bite was followed by a seizure, and as the biter was making off, he was hooked, and then, showing his yellow side for a moment, he darted up stream for the weeds where Tom's friend had been lost: but there was a different man at the rod; the line was free, and went whirring and singing off the winch for about forty yards, when with a gentle hand the prey was checked, and turned down stream again, but only to make a vigorous dart once more in the former direction. However, the struggles were in vain, and five minutes' tussle made the poor fish, as the "Angler's Guide" says, fit for

the landing net, held ready by Tom Phipps, and then, panting upon the grass, lay in all its golden beauty, a fine three-pound carp.

"Ho!" said a gruff voice behind the anglers, "so I'm jest in time. P'raps you'll——"

"Hullo!" exclaimed Tom, with praiseworthy promptitude, "just in time you are. How d'ye do, old boy. Take a sup;" and he thrust a wicker-covered flask into the new-comer's hand.

"But yer know," said the keeper, for such his velveteens, gun, and gaiters testified to his being, "but yer know——"

"Oh it's all right," said Tom; "play up, it's rale Irish."

The keeper looked for the moment quite astounded at this effrontery. He stared at Tom, then at the fish, then at the rest of the party, then at the goodly display of edibles upon the grass beneath a shady oak, and then again at the wicker flask in his hand. He gave the spirit a half shake, when the gurgling jingling laugh the poteen imp gave within, quite overcame his reso-

lution. It was a direct temptation, and with an infant-like effort he took the neck of the flask within his lips, and——

He kept it there.

The gentle spirit seemed to have a soothing effect upon the hard man of the world: the lines in his countenance grew softer, and, as an infant after a similar effort, he became calm and placid.

Upon removing the flask, and handing it back to Tom, the keeper leaned upon his gun for a minute, and gazed at the scaly trophies upon the grass, which seemed to bring him back again to a sense of duty, for he proceeded to address the party with—

"Well, gentlemen, I've come to——"

"Yes," said Tom, taking him up again very short, "and you're just in time. Sit down, old fellow. That's your sort. Lay your gun there. Draw up a little closer. Come, Frank—Steve. Here, young vampire, bring two of those bottles over. Come, gentlemen, lunch. Now, Mr.—— er—what did you say your name was?"

"Call me Sporridge, — Thomas Sporridge," said the new-comer.

"Just so," said Tom. "Then what shall it be, Mr. Sporridge—cold chicken and tongue, or pigeon pie?" But without waiting for any response, Tom hacked off a wing and leg from the cold fowl, cut off the point of the tongue, and dabbed all upon a plate, which, with knife, fork, and condiments, he set before the astonished keeper, who had certainly seated himself, but was evidently wavering in his mind as to the course he ought to pursue.

However, example is said to be better than precept; so, following the pattern set by the rest of the party, Mr. Sporridge commenced business by very awkwardly fumbling the flesh off the fowl's wing.

"Glass of bitter with you, Mr. Sporridge," said Frank, to help out the proceedings, for the keeper did not seem at all comfortable.

"I'll join you," said Stephen.

"And I," said Tom, with his mouth full.

Down went the keeper's knife and fork, and rasp went the back of his hand across his mouth; and then the foaming ale was distributed, and the edibles again attacked, when Mr. Sporridge seemed somewhat easier in his mind, for, bending to circumstances and disdaining the luxuries of civilisation, he drew his whittle from his pocket, pushed the knife and fork aside, placed the chicken leg and lump of tongue upon a goodly slice of bread, and then began to make some progress with the more solid part of the *al fresco* banquet.

"That's your style!" said Tom, approvingly. "I like to see a man make himself at home. Nothing like a raw nip for an appetizer. Feel better after that taste from the flask—don't you?"

Mr. Sporridge gave a nod and a grunt, for he was too busy to speak; he picked the fowl bones with evident gusto, after which he had another help and some more tongue, of which he seemed to approve amazingly. He then, incited to the feat by Tom Phipps, scraped out the pigeon-pie dish, eating

with the random fragments therein a goodly piece of the fat from the thick end of the tongue. Then followed a large triangle of raspberry jam open tart, six cheese-cakes, a piece of "cow pie," *alias* custard, and a knobbly crust and bit of cheese; the whole washed down with copious draughts of bottled ale. Two or three times did he shake his head like a prisoned bull, and glance over his shoulder at the fish; but then the bonds were so gentle, and Tom Phipps was always ready to play Ganymede to the replenishing of his glass; so that by the time the party had well satisfied the pangs of hunger, the unwelcome visitor was quite willing to sit down beneath the oak in a comfortable spot and aid digestion by filling his pipe with some of Tom's choice Bristol Birds'-eye.

The latter gentleman supplied the keeper with a light, started his own pipe, and then, as coolly as could be, took advantage of his victory by sitting down upon the bank right in front of the velveteened incubus, and set an example to his companions by beginning to fish.

Mr. Sporridge removed his pipe from his mouth, stuck his head on one side, and then, with his face screwed up, seemed to say, "He's a nice 'un, ain't he?" He then looked at Frank, pointed towards the fisherman with the short stem of his black pipe, gave a succession of winks and nods, and then shook his head slowly for quite a minute. At last, with a very thick utterance, and quite an effort—

"Blest if ever I was taken in like this here afore," he said, "and I'm blest if I kears how soon I'm took again." He then chuckled for a few moments, replaced his pipe between his lips, and smoked away with all the solidity of a Dutch burgher.

A roar of laughter followed this remark, but Mr. Sporridge did not join in, but sat calmly smoking, for he was evidently in a meditative mood; so the fishing went on without let or hindrance for some time, when all at once the keeper again removed his pipe, and pointing with it in the direction of a willow pollard, he said—

"Shouldn't wonder, if one o' you gents was to try arter a jack down by that tree, you might kitch one."

The sequel proved that Mr. Sporridge was right in his surmise, for half an hour after Stephen drew a fine pike to land. They then fished on with varying success till towards five o'clock, when a large eel which Tom Phipps bagged, or rather basketted, after getting his line into a most outrageous tangle, served to bring the day's sport to a conclusion. So, packing up tackle and fish, they had a parting glass with the keeper before starting the boy off for the inn with the lightened hamper, Tom having re-corked and sent the empty ale bottles down the stream to spread the fame of Bass.

Upon reaching the palings, Mr. Sporridge kindly helped them over with the heavy fish panniers, when Tom lagged behind for a moment with the keeper, who dropped something into his pocket which went "chink," and then, keeping his hand there, he wagged his head knowingly

from side to side, and by way of valediction jerked out to Tom,

"You're a nice sorter young gent, you air."

The shades of night were falling fast, much after the same fashion, no doubt, as they do in Alpine villages, when the fishing party passed through Waveley on their way to the Hall, where, over a late dinner, they amused the Squire with an account of the day's adventures with Mr. Sporridge.

"Confound him, sir," said the Squire. "He had better not come to me for a situation if the Admiral discharges him at any time. I don't know now that I shan't write to his master."

"No, you won't do that, sir," said Tom, "for my sake."

The Squire looked at Tom, with a grim smile wrinkling up his features; but he contented himself with a sonorous "Humph!" and then paid attention to his port.

## CHAPTER VII.

### BRIMSTONE ON MATCHES.

"Going where?" said Sampson Elton.

"To the match," said Frank, quietly.

It was breakfast time at the cottage, on the second day after the fishing excursion. Frank and Sampson were keeping Mrs. Elton busily employed in supplying their wants; so busily, indeed, that she could hardly get any breakfast herself. The demands for bread and butter, coffee, cream, sugar, &c., were incessant; for both gentlemen were early risers, and ate heartily when they met at table. There was no hock, no soda water, no *paté de foie gras;* no Fortnum and Mason or Morel ideas of what a breakfast should be; but such a *déjeûner à la fourchette* as Mrs. Elton thought it right at all times to put upon the

table—a repast which included eggs, brawn, cheek, and a large flagon of ale.

"Going where?" growled Sampson, with his mouth full of brawn, taking a loud "suss" out of his cup, and at the same time adding to his generally sinister aspect by squinting horribly at his coffee.

"To the match," said Frank, quietly.

"Match! what match?" said Sampson.

"Waveley *versus* Edgeton," said Frank, breaking the top of an egg.

"Oh! Cricket match," snarled Sampson. "Lucifer match. A parcel of fools running after a ball like kittens after worsted. Cricket! Humph! Ah! they did not play cricket in my young days."

"Perhaps not, sir," said Frank, in a very dignified manner; "but then we think differently now; and as it is generally allowed that about ninety-five per cent. of our male population belong to the class which you stigmatise as fools—that is to say, do not come up to your standard of

moral excellence—it is only natural that the match should embrace a number of the foolish, although, perhaps, they may be wise in their own conceit. But then philanthropists consider they are doing good by encouraging manly sports—that is, in winning the youth of *our* time from the clay pipe and beer pot of *your* time."

Now this sounded all very well; but then Frank spoiled his moral diatribe by taking up the silver flagon, and having a hearty draught; and he also quite omitted to cast a glance at the place where his meerschaum was standing in one corner of the bookshelf.

"It is calculated," continued Frank, returning the flagon to its place—"it is calculated that these muscle-demanding sports teach people to become, at all events, sober-minded fools, with active, healthy bodies and cool heads to contain what little wit they possess."

"Humph!" said Sampson, while Mrs. Elton quite hugged herself upon her son's ability to cope with the household bear.

Frank finished his egg, and helped himself to a fine jellified piece of brawn, and then continued, with his mouth somewhat full for a university man—but then, perhaps, he thought that when at Rome he might do as Rome did, and, consequently, was not quite so particular as he might have been.

"You see, sir," said Frank, "the game is greatly encouraged at the universities, as one of the most manly of our sports, while the training necessary for a man to excel in the pastime makes him active, keen-sighted, cool, and calculating; bold, and fit for any emergency. The wicket-keeper in a match is like a skilful general, and places his men according to the strength or tactics of his enemy. Cricket is a noble game, sir; and I'm sure you would feel all the better for witnessing the efforts of our village to meet the prowess of Edgeton to day. Lord Furrowdell, Sir Peter, Mr. Glebeley, and many others lend their countenance to the proceedings, as does every man of sense and good feeling, for

though not himself a cricketer, yet he can look upon the enjoyment of others with——"

"Have you nearly done, *Mister* Henderson?" said Sampson.

"Oh! yes; I've done," said Frank.

"Because," said Sampson, "I want to go to work; and I believe you once told me that gentlemen did not interrupt a speaker."

"I believe I did once make such a remark," said Frank, smiling in spite of himself.

"Truly thankful, Amen!" said Sampson, with only the whites of his eyes visible; and then he left the room, greatly to the comfort of Mrs. Elton, who had been on thorns lest some warmth of expression might follow the dissertation on cricket; for, poor woman, in spite of her son's forbearance, she had often, after having been the cause of hot words, to act as mediator.

Frank settled himself down in the bay window, and was soon deep in a geological treatise considering the possibility of the lake system of Switzerland being antecedent to the post-tertiary

glaciers; with a lively description of moraines, loess, boulders, striation, angularity, etcetera, etcetera; and dipping at times into eocene, pliocene, pleistocene, and miocene, all of which appeared to give the reader the most intense satisfaction—the book seeming to partake of the powers of the ostrich gizzard, and acting as a digester of the mighty breakfast of which the student had so lately partaken.

Now it has before been rather broadly hinted that Mrs. Elton was not what the world would call a clever person, and poor woman she knew it well—knew, too, what a blank she had drawn in the matrimonial lottery; but she was clever in her way, as every one testified who had partaken of her dinners, or tasted her confectionery and home-made wines; or as those could tell who had been unfortunate enough to be ill, yet fortunate enough to have had Mrs. Elton's hand to smooth their pillow. She was clever in her way, and above all a most profound reverer of the teachings of the goddess Minerva, so that Frank

had only to take up a book to insure the floor being traversed on tip-toe, and Mary, the maid, scolded for singing in the kitchen.

But with a cricket match to come off, and the possibility of there being ladies upon the ground to watch the efforts of the players, it was not likely that Frank would be in a very studious humour that morning; and about ten o'clock he leaped up, banged down the book with a vigour which made Mrs. Elton jump in her seat; calmed her with a kiss, and then hurried out of the room. In a quarter of an hour he returned, equipped for the struggle in the proper white flannel affected by the men of the bat and ball, and looking like a clean plasterer, as Mrs. Elton told Mary in confidence—Mary, on the strength of having nursed Master Frank as a baby, taking great interest in her "dear boy." But Frank now stood armed for the struggle, with all the necessary pads and gloves, sheathing and bandaging his favourite bat, till required for protecting his hands and legs from the blows of that bruise-begetter so

ubiquitous in the game of cricket. For Frank was a great gun in the Waveley eleven—a man in whom much faith was placed, perhaps more than in Stephen Vaughan, the captain; for the student, though learned with his book, was said to be mighty in leg hits, quick at point, a fearful screw bowler; and altogether one held in the especial abomination of the enemy.

"Now about dinner, my dear?" said Mrs. Elton.

"Well, Mums," said Frank, smiling, "about dinner?"

"What time will you be back, my dear?"

"That's a question it would puzzle me to answer, Mums. It all depends upon the match; but don't wait, for I shall most likely have a snack afterwards with Tom Phipps and Stephen."

"And then be coming home tired and ill for want of proper meals," said Mrs. Elton.

"To the best of mothers to nurse me," said Frank.

"But Frank, dear," said Mrs. Elton; "did

you do what I told you? Now do speak to him about it, or I'm sure——"

But those last words had sent Frank off without a word of farewell; and Mrs. Elton went sighing back to maid Mary in the culinary regions.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A DAY'S IDLENESS.

SAMPSON ELTON certainly bore off the palm for industry upon the match day, for all Waveley was out; while as to work, it was looked upon as an utter impossibility. Even the National School children had obtained a holiday, perhaps a good deal due to the fact that Mr. Timothy Boreham, the master, was to score upon the Waveley side. There the young dogs stood in a knot—rather a tangled knot—close by the white canvas tent, and ready to cheer everything and everybody who came upon the ground. It seemed to them that everything would bear a cheer, and they had begun with one for the fruitseller's donkey, keeping up the charter till the Union Jack was hoisted above the tent, when they cheered louder than ever.

Cricket matches mostly happen upon wet days; but this was an exception; for when the loaded 'bus arrived with the enemy from Edgeton, the sun shone perhaps a little too brightly, while the emerald turf—mown, rolled, and elastic as springy moss could make it—was sprinkled over with visitors, constantly increasing in numbers, from a circle some miles in extent; for though the village club bore the name of Waveley, yet many of its constituents came from a considerable distance. There was young Dilworth from Copse Hall; the two Estcourts from Daley Vicarage; Tom Todd, the Dubbley saddler; and men from Chinkton, Belledale, and Smokeley. It was an eleven whose prowess was known throughout the country, and an important match generally brought down Tom Phipps, who looked upon cricket as the *summum bonum* of life.

But the Edgeton men knew what Waveley could do, and had accordingly made their arrangements, as shown when the Waveley schoolboys cheered, and the 'bus came careering over

the green with a load of their best, to struggle for the laurels ere now lost.

The school-boys cheered as the 'bus drew up, with a flag tied behind the driver; and then the Waveley men took up the cheering by the way of welcoming their adversaries, who loudly responded from inside and outside the 'bus, where they were tightly packed—players and scorers, umpire, friends, and all; and then the cheering continued until the 'bus was unloaded—setting down men in every conceivable costume, and then taking its departure for the Red Lion yard.

This cricket is a wonderful game, and seems to require wonderful dresses. If the men of Marylebone are to be thanked for setting the example, they have much to answer for. Touching the Edgeton men and their heads, they were got up in every variety of gorgeous flannel cap —pink, pale-blue, scarlet, crimson, green, yellow, striped, spotted, splashed, piebald, and skewbald. Then as to their bodies, there were shirts of every rainbow tint, and, altogether, giving the party

as they stood upon the greensward the appearance of an ill-planted bed of common tulips. Then, too, their legs: the Edgeton men delighted in calling their club the "Knickerbockers," and therefore their appearance can be better imagined than described, when it is said they carried the name of their club in their continuations.

"Between eleven gentlemen of the Waveley Union, and eleven gentlemen of the Edgeton Knickerbockers," so spoke the green bill; and then at last the game began, after the usual amount of throwing, catching, attitudinising, and figuring about, while as to the mode of play, the most careful inspection only showed that cricket was played at Waveley in precisely the same fashion as in other parts of the United Kingdom, and therefore a long description of a game which presented no remarkable salient points would be tedious. Let it suffice that the Edgeton men went in first, and that wicket-keeping Tom Phipps was here, there, and everywhere, the very embodiment of India-rubber antics.

Then came the lunch in the tent—"spread in his accustomed way by Host Hopcraft, of the Red Lion"—and then for a time friend and foe ate, drank, and were merry. The bottled-beer corks flew; there were aqueous cucumbers, and cool crimply salads, with pungent vinegar or bland salad cream; cold ham, cold tongue, cold lamb, cold chine, cold round of beef, cold fowls, cold custards, cold tarts—everything cold but the eaters, who were furiously hot. The sun had been pouring down his beams with corn-ripening fury, and the fielders had had their work to do. Several of the principal people of the neighbourhood joined the luncheon, for cricket was in capital odour. The Squire looked in for a while, and the Rector with him—not to lunch, however, but to see others enjoy themselves; while Mr. Deedes, the lawyer, and Mr. Childe, the doctor, thought it not *infra dig.* to quaff bottled beer with the men of the bat.

But before long the players were reminded of the assembled company waiting to witness

their prowess, and the Waveley men now began their innings with Frank Henderson and Tom Phipps batting; but the latter, during one of his elastic skips, managed to knock off a bail, and had to retire, but not without leaving the figure of 9 placed against his name by the scorer. Then came Stephen Vaughan, when, as if in emulation, for quite an hour, Frank and he set the Edgeton men hard to work, chasing the ball into all parts of the field; in the scorer's tent; now into the marquee; under a barouche; amongst the ladies; while one of Stephen Vaughan's hits sent the ball so far, that on alighting it gave a hop and went right out of the field.

But the best innings must have an end, and both our friends had to succumb at last, but retired amidst a perfect ovation of clapping. The sun shone his hottest; but it seemed to have no visible effect upon the players, who only toiled the harder. The only people visibly affected by the heat were the lookers-on, who kept moving about as the ray-crowned monarch swept majes-

tically on, peering with inquiring gaze beneath parasols, and into places where but a short time before the shade had it all its own way. For uncommonly fond of a pretty face and a clear skin is the sun, almost as bad in that respect as Jupiter of old, only he is more open and straightforward. These are no animal habits and metamorphoses. Where the sun kisses, he kisses boldly, and, moreover, leaves his mark tingling and burning for hours. Who so fond of playing with glossy tresses? Hiding amongst them, toying with them, and darting in and out from amidst the perfumed maze—oft and oft dwelling there until old Time with his sour aspect and wintry ways drives him out to dwell there instead —silvering with frosty rime the locks which fast grow thin. And the sun was as bad as ever upon the Waveley match day, for Madeline Glebeley and Alice Vaughan were full of complaints. Like many more they had strolled down to the field to watch the progress of the match, and wanted to appear very much pleased and delighted with all

the proceedings. They both thought it very agreeable when Frank and Stephen were winning the plaudits of all around, though for what they were applauded did not seem to them clear, unless it was for running backwards and forwards a great many times and making themselves very hot.

But in truth the ladies were decidedly not delighted with the match; they wanted protection, and to be taken down amongst the leafy groves and by the rippling river, far away from the rudeness of Phœbus. And at last Alice pettishly exclaimed—

"What enjoyment there can be in running after that stupid ball, I can't see. Do come away, dear. It's so hot and tiresome, and now the gentlemen we know have done playing, the interest, if there ever was any, seems quite gone. Do let us go."

"No, don't," said a plaintive voice at her elbow; and starting and looking round, there stood Tom Phipps at her side, smoking a cigar.

"No, don't," said Tom, "we are just coming to repose upon our laurels."

"Laurels," said Alice, "why, I always thought that those nasty cigars were made of cabbage leaves."

"Oh, nonsense! You know what I mean, only I am such an unlucky little fellow," said Tom. "I always make a muddle of things. Nice game though, isn't it?"

"Nice game?" said Alice. "I haven't patience with anyone for being so absurd as to—to——"

"Dress himself in Dutch knickerbockers, eh?" said Frank, joining the party with Stephen. "What do you think of our London friend, Miss Glebeley? Is he not the very *beau ideal* of a cricketer?"

"Or a muff!" suggested Stephen, laughing.

"Fie! Steve," said Alice, tartly.

"Oh! don't interfere, Miss Vaughan; pray don't," said Tom, in a lachrymose tone. "Your dear brother is quite right—the great are always just. But he made use of an obsolete term—

'Muff.' He should have said 'Duffer,' as being more polite and in accordance with present-day observances. Pray let him continue his castigation. You see he strikes at me, but it is only in the process of sharpening his own blunt faculties against the whetstone of my logic. Don't you think he improves, Frank?"

"In what?" said Frank.

"In what? Why in mental ability. A fine fellow, you see, but he is too big: there's the marble for a noble statue, but the corners want knocking off. He requires fining down; and there will be plenty left then."

"Those who live in glass houses——" said Frank.

"Oh, bother!" cried Tom. "But I say, ladies, don't go. The match will be decided in the first innings, and there's all the fun of the day to come—no end of wickets to go down."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Alice, "how can you think that we care anything for wickets, and balls, and stumps, and such nonsense. Stephen

is for ever talking of the rubbish, when his mouth is not full of horses and dogs. I'm tired of it aren't you, Madeline? Do let us go."

But Madeline was listening to some explanations that were being given by Frank, and was evidently in no hurry to leave the ground; while Stephen had planted himself beneath an oak, and was smoking furiously, perhaps because he had no companion. And then somehow or another a conversation sprang up between Alice and the little gentleman in blue knickerbockers—a conversation which lasted some considerable time, and would have lasted longer, but for the interruption of Madeline, who, strolling up to where they stood, said playfully—

"How much longer am I to wait for you, Ally?"

Alice bit her lip, and the colour flushed to her cheek, but only to leave it again slightly pale; but she recovered herself directly, laughed, made a threatening gesture at her companions with her parasol, and then they strolled towards the gate;

while as Tom's prophesy proved to be no better than those of "Tao Tse," the gentlemen had to wait and take part again, to oppose the Edgeton second innings. As Frank stood gazing after those who had but a minute before left them, he suddenly started and turned to where Stephen was watching him with so bitterly intense a look that for a few minutes the young men faced each other angrily, when the voice of Tom Phipps broke the spell, and they went and played until the evening came on, when the stumps were removed, leaving the game in that most unsatisfactory of states—drawn.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE SORROWS OF GRAVES.

Tom's leave of absence was expiring, and Bill Graves brought round the dog-cart; *adieux* were said, when after passing rather a pungent remark upon the man's head of hair,—a remark which quite spoilt the flavour of the bestowed sixpence, —the horse was whipped-up, and Tom Phipps gone, leaving Bill Graves standing with his brow knit, and looking, to say the least of it, rather cut.

Bill Graves was the "ne'er do weel" of the village; but when he liked there was always a job for him up at the Hall. At the present time he had just come out of Ramsford gaol, and on reaching the cottage rented of Sampson Elton, he found his wife waiting to welcome him home, with a thumping great seven weeks' baby for him to keep. The cottage looked clean and

tidy, and the table was covered with needlework, which tidiness rather surprised Bill, and he stood scratching his head with one hand, not in the least disarranging his hair by so doing, for the county barber had taken it off rather close.

The act of scratching his head seemed to bring no elucidation of the mystery—the aspect of comfort where he had looked for misery—so he tried rubbing his hollow cheek with the other hand. At the very least, when he came out, he expected to have found the cottage occupied by another tenant, and his wife in the union. As to the baby, that was a little event he was prepared for—that is, as to seeing it, but not as to the calls it would make on his exchequer. For Bill's exchequer was very low, as might well be expected. He was the "ne'er do weel" not from idleness or true vagabondism, but his lot had been cast in the village of Waveley, which happened to be surrounded by estates where game was strictly preserved, and where it consequently abounded. If there had been neither partridge, pheasant,

nor hare in the neighbourhood, I have no hesitation in saying that Bill Graves would have been an honest man; but, as there were all these temptations in the way, Bill was not honest, that is, as far as the Game Laws were concerned, for there he was constantly giving way to his special weakness. He must have been possessed by a game devil; for it was of no use to fine or imprison him. Every magistrate upon the Edgeton bench had given him warnings and reprimands till Bill, with tears in his eyes, declared that he would never set another snare or take another "fezzan" as long as he lived. But it was of no use: before a month was over he would be at it again; be caught; and at last be favoured with a taste of that prescription for the cure of poaching to be found in the Justices' Manual, to wit —three months' imprisonment with hard labour.

Hard labour he was used to, for he was a good workman at farm duties; but no sooner had he obtained an engagement, and, all was going on swimmingly, than some impish hare would tempt

him by showing him where she was in the habit of going to feed, when he could not help setting a wire for her, and of course the keepers would find it—watch it—and then poor Bill Graves would again be introduced to his friends upon the Edgeton bench.

When Bill, who was a fine, stalwart, good-humoured-looking fellow—when Bill had the audacity to fall in love, and marry Jim Wood's sister—Jim Wood being one of Sampson Elton's men, a dark, slow-speaking fellow, who rejoiced in the *sobriquet* of Solid Mahogany—when Bill married Jim Wood's sister, he spat in his hands fiercely, and took hold of the plough handles with the determination of giving up "porching," and capitally he kept to his determination. But Bill was but mortal, like the hares, and one day, in going to his work, he espied pussy snared in the hedge by the roadside, and dead, as if killed a week since.

Bill stopped and looked at the hare. It was "a fine 'un." Bill thought he should like to

have it. Next day Sunday, too. Only to think, roasted, with a pudding inside, after a month's bacon. It was an awful temptation, and the tempted one turned all over in a perspiration with the struggle which was going on within him. He thought of his wife—of Ramsford gaol—of the magistrates, and of his determination to get into no more scrapes; and then he walked on about a dozen yards.

"Dal it all," said Bill, "I should like to have it;" and then he looked back at the hare, which lay with one eye open, and showing its teeth, as if laughing at him. "Dal it all, I should like to have it," said Bill again. "Can't be no harm, as I didn't set the snare. Be stopping other chaps from porching, if they don't get no luck."

All this while the hare was fascinating Bill with that one open eye, and drawing him back to the spot he had left but a minute before.

Bill looked to the left, then to the right, then up and down, and behind each hedge.

Nobody!

"Lord! how hot it is," said Bill, wiping his face with his sleeve, and then hesitating again.

He took another survey of the place.

Nobody!

"Wonder who set that snare," he said, in a husky voice. "Dal it all, I can't help it," he exclaimed at last. "I wouldn't touch it if it warn't for my lass for to-morrow's dinner." And then he jumped across the ditch, dragged poor pussy out of her wire necklace, ran about a dozen yards towards a bed of stinging nettles, and then stooped down to conceal his prize.

But the hare hid itself: for poor Bill dropped it, and down it went to the bottom of the ditch and out of sight; for out of the midst of the tall venomous stems appeared the upper half of one of Bill's direst enemies, dressed in a dark green velveteen shooting-coat.

"Hullo, my lad!" said Mr. Thomas Sporridge, with a pleasant grin upon his countenance.

"Hullo!" said Bill, sulkily.

"Saturday week, my boy," said velveteen,

stooping and picking up the hare, and then bearing it off without another word, while poor Bill went moodily to his work.

When he reached home that night a summons awaited him, and on the Saturday week he had the pleasure of meeting the keeper before the magistrates; and a very good case the keeper made out against poor Bill, who in vain protested that he did not set the snare. But Bill's character hung millstone-like about his neck, and the desperate poacher was sent off, to be under the care of Governor Gatward, at Ramsford Gaol, for three months.

But now Bill was out once more, and had hugged his wife to his heart's content, vowing again and again that he would never more touch hare or pheasant—no, not even if they asked him, which was not very likely to happen.

"But how well thee looks, lass," said Bill; "and how hast ta kep house and home together? How did thee get on with old Elton 'bout the rent?"

Mrs. Graves told how she had been pressed and threatened by the landlord, and how at last she had appealed to the young master, who had helped her in her difficulty.

Bill Graves' countenance did not bode much good for friend Sampson, as he listened to his wife's recital; but the latter part acted as an emollient, and he smiled with pleasure again.

"What!" he exclaimed, "paid the whole two pounds? The whole of it? God bless him!"

Bill Graves was a great, ignorant man; but he must have been a big fool into the bargain, or he never would have laid his great, rough, stupid-looking head upon his wife's shoulder, his arm round her neck, and done what hard usage and imprisonment had never drawn from him—sobbed and cried like a great boy—and all because an act of kindness had been done for his wife; but so it was; and possibly prison fare may have had something to do with the matter.

"God bless him!" exclaimed Bill Graves, rubbing his eyes. "If ever I can do him a good turn,

I will. See, lass, how weak I've got. It's prison fare does it. And so squire's wife gave thee all the needlework to do, and there's work up there for me, is there? Lord! and I've taken scores of rabbuds and fezzans off squire's ground afore now; but no more of that, lass, if I knows on it. Nor nobody else shan't touch 'em, if I knows it. But if ever there's a hare to be got on old Elton's land, dal me if I don't have it, and that, too, down to the last."

"Oh, Bill!" exclaimed his wife; "and what did you promise?"

"Dal it, lass, so I did; what a fool I be, sewer*ly*. Well, it is a fine un," continued Bill, as his wife proudly displayed the points of the little, or rather big, stranger that had made its appearance during its father's incarceration.

"And it is such a good one," said Mrs. Graves, "never hardly cries a bit, and——"

"Ware—ware—ware—ware," went the little Graves.

"Say," said Bill, "what do you call that, then?"

"Only wants its dinner, a beauty!" said Mrs. Graves, supplying the needful meal upon the spot, while Bill sat and looked on, as proud and pleased and happy as if he had been born in Belgravia, and were then sitting in a patrician mansion, he being a patrician himself.

"And so the young master did all that, did he? Two pounds!" said Bill, after a five minutes' pause. "God bless him! If ever I can do him a good turn, I will."

If poor Bill could have seen into the future, he would no doubt have felt disposed to rob—poach—anything to get himself sent out of the country, anywhere, so that he might not injure the man he now felt that he would go through fire and water to serve.

## CHAPTER X.

### A REFORMER.

"WHO's him, Dick?" said one of the Waveley National School children, as he had to halt in his game of marbles to let "him" pass, which passage was effected without the administration of the customary spatula wave of the hand called by courtesy a bow. But Dick could not give the required information, and the unknown passed on in the direction of the Rectory, quite unconscious that he formed an attraction which drew forth head after head from the cottage doors he passed. He was ignorant of the good stares taken after him till he was out of sight—the pursuit of knowledge most religiously observed in country villages.

But nobody knew who he was, even when those who had not seen him heard him described

by those who had. They soon however arrived at the goal of their ambition in the village, for the gentleman in question, with a Bible in one hand, a very, very attenuated umbrella in the other, and a packet of assorted tracts, at six shillings per hundred, beneath his arm, began visiting from house to house, and announced himself as the new curate. He may be described as tall, thin, pale, fair, and rather given to pimples upon the forehead, whose noble expanse was partly concealed by the well-smoothed, centrally-parted, bird-sandy hair, redolent of castor oil pomade.

The owner of the above forehead might have been about twenty-five; his face was very clean shaven; his teeth very white, as also were his hands and cravat; while his whole body was most rigidly stiff and black—even the ordinary shirt front of daily life being carefully covered by a silken semi-cassock, or whatever the name of the garment might be which did duty for the ordinary waistcoat.

"Ah!" said Mrs. Teedate, at the shop, while attending upon Mrs. Bloveel, the butcher's wife—not the lady famed in the old catch for her sanguinary behaviour—"Ah!" said Mrs. Teedate, "what in all conscience he can want with a curate, I don't know. It isn't so much that he has to do."

But the rector thought he did want a curate, and his thoughts turned in that direction when the perpetual curacy of Belledale fell into his living; when as there was service at both places every Sunday, and he was not ubiquitous, he considered it necessary to engage the new curate.

Waveley folk had been jogging along very comfortably under the rector's spiritual regime. They had been christened by him; grown up; grown old; confessed every week that they were miserable sinners; listened to his quiet, earnest, old-fashioned sermons, and then gone to sleep "close to parson's garden," with a wooden tablet to mark the spot. While for education the young

had been under Mr. Boreham, whose wife taught the sewing. Timothy Boreham had held his post of master of the school for many years, to the satisfaction of Mr. Glebeley, who regularly expressed it by inviting the master to dine with him twice a year—Madeline Glebeley taking his wife under her charge upon such feast days. But the rector had another way of showing his satisfaction, and that was by sending down to the school-cottage sundry baskets of the famous fruit and vegetables—the latter act being one of greater importance than the former; for the rector felt a wrench at his heart every time he cut or picked the produce of his garden; for, as he said to Madeline, "It does seem such a pity," and to his way of thinking it was like destroying a picture by cutting out some particular group in the canvas.

Mr. Boreham had only one defect in Mr. Glebeley's eyes. It was a serious defect, certainly, and gave the poor man anything but an ennobling aspect; but it interfered in no wise

with his duties as a teacher, being as far from the brain as was possible; and in justice to the rector it must be said, that he would not have retained an unsuitable person to teach the poor children of his parish. Mr. Boreham's defect was a wooden leg; and upon wet days this used to go "plug, plug," down the rectory gravel walks, leaving a hole for every step the worthy man took—the wetter the day, the deeper the impression; so that, fond as Mr. Glebeley was of displaying the treasures of his garden, it was only after a long dry season that Mr. Boreham was invited to inspect them.

But things were going now to be put to rights in Waveley. There was to be an orthodox revival; not a muffin struggle, with hold-forth accompaniments to improve the occasion, and a collection afterwards for the benefit, &c., &c., but a thorough wakening-up of the affairs of the church-militant in the village, which the Reverend Augustus Newman, the new curate, considered had been sadly neglected; while, for his own

private consideration, before he had been there many days, he had made out the following memoranda:—

"*The School.* (Mem.) Decidedly bad.

*Church Services.* (Mem.) Only two on Sunday. No saints' days observed. No week-day services. To propose morning prayer, and lectures on Wednesday and Friday.

*Clothing Club.* (Mem.) Not well managed.

*Coal Club.* (Mem.) Ditto, ditto.

*Dorcas Charity.* (Mem.) Something of this kind should be introduced.

*District Visiting.* (Mem.) Should be instituted immediately. State of morals and religious knowledge extremely low.

*General Mem.* In labouring in the vineyard, bring a little well under cultivation before attempting more. The above sufficient for the first few weeks."

The notions of the Reverend Augustus Newman upon the management of a parish slightly differed from those of his senior, who, however,

merely looked upon the peculiarities of Mr. Newman as proceeding from excess of zeal, and considered that when he had worn the surplice for a few years, the new curate would settle down into a quiet business-like clergyman. But Mr. Newman's ideas were high, excessively high, and he showed them in every way, even to the shape of his very long-skirted frock-coat. The notes which appear above were jotted down in a journal which he kept, bound in limp clerical cloth, red-edged, with a mitre upon the side, and all the saints' days brought by the printer's art very prominently into notice.

Now a great deal might be said respecting Mr. Newman's first entrée; but as the pen of the historian is prone to exaggerate, a few more extracts from the above journal may not be considered as being out of place,—such extracts, of course, bearing upon them the "Hall" mark of authenticity.

"*Aug.* 1*st*, *Sunday.—Seventh after Trinity.*—

Went to the school. Children very

brusque in their manner. Only one teacher beside the master and his wife. Master too authoritative. Children ignorant. Set texts.—Church. Preached. Subject, Baptism. Congregation decidedly not of an attentive turn. Singing bad. No intoning. Hymns require changing. Clerk unnecessary.—*Afternoon.*—School and service. Read prayers. Rev. Charles Glebeley preached. Very evangelical views. Decidedly unsatisfactory.

*Aug. 3rd, Tuesday.*—Visited all day. *Most* unsatisfactory. People truly parents of school-children. Rude and abrupt in manner. Tracts often refused. At one house threatened: old woman seized kettle to pour hot water in my boots. Pitied her and left. Questioned parishioners upon worldly and religious subjects, but found it hard to get answers.

*Mem.* Strange as yet. More at home shortly.

*August 5th, Thursday.*—Weary day. Much to contend with. Visiting: called at the mill. Mrs. Elton, woman of most Christian spirit. Son Cambridge graduate, but at present at home. Able to give him much advice, and raise his ideas. Introduced to Mr. Elton. Brand to rescue from the burning. At present an evil man and a scoffer. Talked of the state of the poor, but told that he never gave in charity. Quoted texts to him. Seemed morose and harsh. Bluntly told not to call again, as not wanted. Went."

The above notes, taken at random, show that Mr. Newman had much to contend with on first entering Waveley: but he set determinedly to work upon his improving mission, greatly to the disgust of the old stagers who had a most thorough dislike to anything new.

But the Reverend Augustus Newman had not come alone, for he had brought with him a sister, who appeared to be his opposite in everything

besides sex. Upon the first encounter she looked as though Nature had tried to make a pair of Alice Vaughans, one fair and the other dark, and that this was the dark one; but upon a closer examination a considerable difference could be detected. For one thing, Annie Newman, in addition to being short, was decidedly disposed to be "podgy," and instead of the sharp keen looks of Alice, she always appeared to be having a battle with her features to keep them under subjection, so as to preserve a dry serious aspect, one that would well accord with the position of her brother, as the new curate of Waveley. The pair had taken apartments near the mill, at the residence of Miss Cinques, an elderly maiden lady, whose abode was of the prim, prim, and such a one as would be sure to attract the attention of a lover of order like the Reverend Augustus. The gravel walk up to the front door was the very perfection of gravel walks, bordered upon either side with lavender-blossomed thrift — emblematic herb. The door step was of the

whitest, and the brass knocker of the brassiest; but there was something uncomfortable about Miss Cinques' house, and the on-looker would be some few moments before he could detect the cause. It was not that the house was not of a goodly shape, nor that the windows were not clean and curtained, nor yet that the stucco was not neatly coloured—there was something else; and that was the position the house occupied. It looked, as it stood by the road side, as though it had been built and put there for the present, or until a better place could be found for it. For Mr. Cinques *pater* had built the house to live in himself, retired, and being a man of very genteel ideas, he did not wish for trade to mingle with his retirement, especially now that he had disposed of the good-will and fixtures of the butcher's business at Ramsford. So he built his house upon the piece of land he had purchased; was his own architect; and cleverly contrived that the mill business should not interfere or be intrusive; for he made

his house with a blank wall where the front should have been, while a sort of semi-front and back were made, looking in a one-eyed manner up and down Waveley Green lane, thus preserving the genteel at the expense of the picturesque.

Miss Cinques was not above talking about her new lodgers, her expressed opinion being that Miss Newman was a very nice sensible girl; and Miss Cinques was not far out in her reckoning, for Miss Newman's nature matched well with her looks; and it really was a fact that she did work hard to preserve the serious aspect she wore, and many a little skirmish had she with Augustus respecting the observance of saints' days and dress.

"Now it's of no use, Gus," she exclaimed, soon after their arrival at Waveley. "I want to be good: but I'm not going to do precisely as you like. If you don't get a piano I won't stop. And as to wearing one of those absurd, pokey, Sister of Mercy bonnets, and black gowns and

mantles and white caps, why I won't do it. What do I want with a cap?"

An unbiassed observer would have immediately said "Nothing," as he gazed upon the mass of luxuriant black tresses the maiden shook over her shoulders as she spoke. And the Reverend Augustus said nothing, for his sister did not give him time to speak, but continued—

"You know, Gus, mamma would not approve of it. I will always go and see any poor person who is ill, and read, and teach little things, and be as kind as I can; but I really do not see how I can be more christianlike to people by dressing myself up like an ugly old guy. And then, too, I can't go and give them tracts and talk to them like you do to the little Sunday School children. I'm sure they don't want it, and don't like it; and I'm sure I don't want it and don't like it; and that just matches beautifully; so you need say no more to me about district visiting. If you can get Miss Cinques, and some more old maids like her to go, why you may; but I don't

mean to. I'll look serious when we are out, and all that, but I don't intend to do precisely as you like, sir!"

Then followed two shakes and a toss of the head, which made the long curls glisten and dance, while the little face looked as prettily imperious as possible.

"For shame, Annie," said her brother, with dignity, as he raised his eyes from the copy of "St. Thomas à Kempis" he held in his hand; "For shame, child!"

"Child, indeed!" cried Annie; "why, you are only five years older than I am. But there, that will do. Oh! I do wish I had a piano."

"It would be much better for your welfare, Annie, if you would do as I wish you," said her brother.

"La-la-la, la-la-la, la-a," sang Annie. "I say, Gus, that's such a pretty new valse, just out. I should like it so. I heard it before we came down here, and don't know the name. Do you?"

"I do not trouble myself about such trifles,

Annie," said her brother pompously, "and I wish you would not prattle so much."

"Oh! but Gus," said his sister, with her great eyes twinkling with merriment. "You'll have to marry the vicar's—rector's—incumbent's—what's his name's daughter. She's such a pretty girl. She called here with her father and a Miss Warne, or Vaughan, or something—a little blue-eyed fairy thing. They came while you were out, and we are to dine at the rector's on Saturday. You should have been at home."

"I am glad I was not, Annie," said the curate, "for I was far better employed."

"La-la-la, la-a," sang Annie; "but I'm afraid you would have no chance, Gus. You're such an old goose where there are ladies. You used to be a nice boy before you took to all that high-church stuff, and——"

"Really, Annie," exclaimed her brother, "I cannot sit here if you will persist in talking such idle nonsense. I must request that you will be silent, or I must leave the room."

Annie Newman took up a Berlin wool slipper she was working, sighed, looked at the canvas, and made a grimace at it, which compressed her mouth up into a position that would have prompted kissing even to a serious mind, for she had very cherry lips. She then looked at her brother and yawned. Then the needle wanted threading, and, as every one knows, wool needles are not easy to thread, for in spite of that long oval eye —squeezed Chinese—the wool will not hold together, and often renders several essays necessary. So in this case; and by the time the needle was "thriddled," Annie Newman yawned again, and looked out of the window, and as she did so performed an act which ought to have been attended to before—put her little, soft, white hand before her mouth.

"I say, Gus, dear," she exclaimed, "look here! Who are these?"

"I don't know," said her brother, without raising his eyes from the notes he was making and therefore telling something very like a fib.

"One *is* a nice-looking fellow," continued Annie, peeping from behind the curtain. "Such a giant, Gus. You would look a 'scrubby boy' beside him. He looks like a great Saxon hero. Such whiskers. And the other looks—well, I don't know how he looks. Why, they've gone into the house where that ugly miller lives—the man who was so rude to you. I'll go and ask Miss Cinques who they are."

"Annie!" exclaimed her brother; "for shame! I desire that you do nothing of the kind. Only consider——"

But Annie Newman had not stayed to consider, for she disappeared in a moment, and soon after returned with her news.

"Why, Gus, one's Squire Vaughan's son,—the great one is; and he's that pretty little thing's sister—No, I mean she's his sister; and the other's Mr. Frank Henderson, and he's at college, and they say he's to be married to—whom do you think? Guess, Gus. You won't? Then I'll tell you. They say he's to be engaged to Miss

Glebeley! Only think! And there won't be a bit of chance for poor old Gussy. Never mind; you shall have the little fairy, and I'll have the big hero. I say, Gus."

"Well, Annie," said her brother.

"I hope they won't make such a stupid of that one at college as they have of some one I know."

The Reverend Augustus Newman did not condescend to speak, and his sister went on with her Berlin slipper.

## CHAPTER XI.

### MRS. ELTON'S PRESERVES.

"CLISH—clash—clangle," came a resonant noise from the kitchen at the Mill cottage.

"There, now," exclaimed Mrs. Elton, "if that's one thing that girl has broken this week, I'm sure it's twenty. What servants are coming to I don't know. What with the airs, *and* the dress, AND the breakages, one had better a great deal do the work oneself, for girls now are worse than useless. There's no getting a bit of dirt up without being always at their elbow; and if they are left alone to dust the best parlour, one day it's a glass shade, another it's a china ornament, then the broom goes through the window, or else, if there is a fire, the hot coals are poked and rattled out upon the new hearth-rug. The other day the flower vase was upset, and a great

bit chipped out of the edge, so that it looked like one of Frank's pieces of bread and butter after a bite, and there was the water swimming all over the table, and soaking into Tennyson and Browning."

"Poor fellows!" said Frank laughing.

"Now, don't be absurd, dear," said Mrs. Elton; "you know I mean soaking into the covers of my best books. The candle grease upon the stair carpet is really fearful; and as to the way in which hot cinders are allowed to go flaring into the dripping pan, it's quite shameful."

"The horrors of house-keeping, Miss Glebeley," said Frank.

Madeline looked very serious, and shook her head at him, while Mrs. Elton went on with her dissertation upon servants and their feelings.

"Do you know, my dears, I was quite ashamed the other day when Mr. Glebeley called. The place smelt for all the world like old Crowder's candle-house at Edgeton, that used to come whiff into Miss Etchings's establishment for young

ladies, and because it came so often, and was such a nuisance, the Chowdrys, those Indian girls, were taken away."

"What used to come in so often, mamma?" said Frank. "What used to come whiff in? the candle-house?"

Miss Glebeley bent her head over her work and smiled.

"Now, my dear boy," said Mrs. Elton, "what nonsense you do talk. How can you be so absurd? Why, the smell, of course. We always used to call it mutton-chop day when the nasty puffs used to come in. Now, Mary, mind how you put the tray down. See there how you are treading upon Miss Glebeley's dress. For goodness' sake do be more careful."

Poor Mary, always rather red respecting the eminences of her countenance, which looked as though the sun of good-humour were rising somewhere from out the clouds of discontent, and brightening her plain face—poor Mary turned redder than ever, and then in her confusion

tripped over the edge of the hearthrug, to the imminent risk of depositing the contents of the tray in the visitor's lap, making Mrs. Elton terribly wroth, for Miss Glebeley was a guest whom for special reasons she delighted to honour. But she felt that the scolding earned must, along with the query respecting the clatter in the kitchen, be put off for the present, though the cause of the noise was evident in the chipped and whitened edges of the tea tray. So, after two or three furtive frowns at the delinquent, Mrs. Elton proceeded to make the tea.

The first step was taken by giving the teapot a foretaste of the scalding draught it was shortly to receive; and then Mrs. Elton turned to the tea-caddy for the requisite number of spoonfuls for visitor and pot; but before the tea could be reached, the caddy had to be opened; and before the caddy could be opened, the keys had to be found. So Mrs. Elton plunged her arm up to the shoulder in an opening which lay amidst the voluminous folds of her best

black silk, and then and there searched for the bunch.

At such a time Mrs. Elton's countenance was well worthy of study: it displayed a curious intermixture of surprise, pleasure, vexation, and anxiety, rippling as it were amidst the features. Her hand, to judge from the play of her countenance, must have come in contact with numberless little household treasures that had been considered as gone for ever. Every now and then something was chased up into a corner, and then fished up to the surface—something which had been sought for with sorrow, and cost poor Mary many a scolding for having thrown away with the ashes, or shaken out of the cloth, or poured down the sink, or made away with in some thoroughly domestic manner; but which now turned up in Mrs. Elton's redoubtable pocket. There was the ivory apple scoop; the piece of orris root; the little text book; the bodkin case; the silver stiletto; and the hundred other things that it is absolutely necessary should

be kept warm in a middle-aged lady's pocket; but there were no keys forthcoming.

At last, when it seemed evident that they were not there, and Mrs. Elton's supply of words expressive of vexation were entirely exhausted, Mary was summoned.

"I must have left them on the dressing-table, Mary."

"Yes, mum," said Mary, twiddling her apron, but without stirring from her place.

"Well, why don't you fetch them?" said Mrs. Elton.

"Pleas'm, what, mum?" said poor Mary.

"Why, the keys, you foolish creature," exclaimed her mistress.

Mary hurried off, and had just reached the table in question, as indicated by the deadened "thud-thud" of her heavy foot overhead, when, with an outburst of pleasant smiles, Mrs. Elton exclaimed—

"There they are;" produced the keys from her pocket, trotted off to the stair foot, and began

jingling the bunch, bell-fashion, as a signal to Mary that they were found.

Mrs. Elton could make a much better cup of tea when Sampson was out than when that worthy was at home. It may be that she felt less nervous, and could pay more attention to the pot; or perhaps the pot sulked, or jibbed, when the master was present, and would not draw. However, be that as it may, the tea was always of a richer and deeper cairngormy hue when Sampson was absent; and it was after creaming and sugaring one of these cups that Mrs. Elton observed to Madeline:—

"Now, pray make a good tea, my dear. It is so good of you to come, for I know what a stupid old woman I grow, and that boy says I am always talking."

But neither Madeline nor Frank seemed particularly conversational, for there was a feeling of constraint, and but little was said, except when Frank made a forced attempt at saying something meant to be witty; and therefore it

was a relief for them when Mrs. Elton did all she could to deserve her son's accusation.

"Now do eat, my dear," she exclaimed. "You are making a miserable tea. It was really very kind of you to come."

"There, do be quiet, mamma," said Frank; "you are trying all you can to spoil Miss Glebeley's meal. Since she has been kind enough to condescend to visit such common people again, don't keep casting her sin in her teeth."

"Frank!" exclaimed Madeline, in a tone of playful reproach.

"Frank!" exclaimed Mrs. Elton. "How can you talk so, when I'm sure no gentleman's son——"

"There, there," exclaimed Frank, rising. "I have only half finished my tea, and if there is any more such flattery-tinged language uttered in my presence I shall gird up my loins and flee, and come back no more till night. Only think, Miss Glebeley, what a life for a man to lead when his very mother tries to ruin the

moral tone of his composition by strengthening his self-esteem. Times are altered since we played together as children. Where I used to be scolded, now I'm flattered. It's perfectly shocking to one's sense of propriety."

"I really should go," said Madeline laughingly.

"No, I'll not," said Frank, sitting down; "I'll stay out of spite. But I won't hear another word. Let's change the subject. I say, mamma, how do they make muffins? I mean, how do they put the holes in?"

Saying which, Frank handed the plate to Madeline, who shook her curls at him and tried to frown, but failed signally, for, somehow or another, the frown became a deep smile.

"Why, my dear," said Mrs. Elton, quite seriously, "I believe the holes come of——Get out! you're always getting in the cream. The flies are really such a nuisance that——Tchut! be off with you, do, fly. There, it's of no use crawling under the spoon; you must go. They

are such a nuisance that I shall be obliged to have one of those sticking blisters the men sell at Edgeton. I must have one or two, even if they are taken out of the room when Mr. E. comes in; for he has always hated them since he set his new white hat upon one last summer, and then wore it sticking on all the way to market, and did not find it out till a boy laughed at him. Dear me, how he did go on; but, cross as he was, I told him it was his own fault, for he had no business to have brought his hat farther than the passage when he came in, and——"

"But the muffins, mother mine," said Frank, laughing.

"There, you're laughing at me again, my dear, and I can't help it, so it's no use. But, to be sure, the muffins. Dear, dear, though, what have I been doing? I've been pouring the cream into the sugar. But you won't mind, my dears, I dare say. Well, they mix flour, and milk, and yeast, and——but, stop, let me see; do they put in yeast, or don't they? I don't quite remember;

but they have a flat iron and some rings, and stir it together, and bake them. What *is* he saying to make you laugh, Miss Glebeley? I'm sure he's whispering something disparaging; but I don't mind now, for I am pretty well used to his teasing, and I don't believe, after all, that he wanted to know anything about the muffins."

It was pleasant upon that sunny evening, sitting at the open window with its screen of geraniums, and roses, and jasmine peering in from without. Sitting silently without wish or desire to speak—sitting thinking, surrounded by that soft medium which grows thinner as years glide by, but which in youth tinges all around with soft but glowing colours, making the simplest spot, the most ordinary building wear a hue that renders it attractive. After long years, how changed! How vainly we seek again to view all things through that happy medium—that *couleur-de-rose*-tinting haze. Time seems to ripen the mental sight, so that we look upon things as they really are. Youth taught to magnify the bright

and diminish the dull; but age shows all with the proper balance preserved. Fields, flowers, hedge or woodside, all seem to be changed: the flower appears to have lost its tints, and the attractiveness which rendered a pale primrose from a bank more to be desired than a rose, has passed away. There was a certain bright romance which clothed all things then; and now only by night—in that short transition state before sleep quite takes possession of our senses—do we see mentally the scenes of the past as they once appeared. Then come again the softened strains of old airs, sweet, thrilling, and soul-stirring to a degree. Happy that man who, leaving the cares of the present, can fall back into the happiness of the past, even to the time when he learned that there was "nothing half so sweet in life as Love's young dream"!

Ah! 'twas pleasant sitting by that open window listening to the "wash-wash, hurry-hurry" of the waters as they left the mill-wheel—sitting gazing out upon the smiling golden landscape, now

glowing with tints that a Turner would hardly have dared to imitate for fear of the charge of exaggeration—sitting silently, thought wrapped in thought, and heart seeming to speak to heart from the eyes alone, as ever and anon they met.

It is questionable whether, in the correct and stereotyped form, Frank had ever told his love, or whether he had ever asked for a return. The late reserve on Madeline's part, however, had wakened the student to a true sense of his own feelings—to a knowledge of the ardent love which had been the growth of many years—green at first, and tender, but strengthening like a plant of ivy till it had bound him in its clinging embrace; while now, to his great joy, Frank felt that it held another in its toils—that from playmates and confidants a warmer and holier feeling had sprung up—slowly, imperceptibly, but none the less firm and sure.

The sun fast sank towards his rest, and the shadows began to darken in the corners of that little room. Eve's breath, moist, cool, and

refreshing, as the light mists began to hover about the river, was wafted slowly and gently—wafted, burdened as it was with the scents of a thousand flowers, through the open window—a breath that in its soft intoxicating perfume seemed to tell of love. The lark sang its last notes, and the thrush was pouring forth its evening song to the parting day, while the hum of the beetle and the distant lowing of the cattle formed a softened bass for Nature's sweet evening hymn. It seemed now that words would have been out of place, and indeed they were entirely wanting; but a sympathy existed which well filled the void, and was far more eloquent in its silence.

The last rays of the god of day must have rested awhile upon Madeline's cheek, for, dim as the room had grown, a bright flush was visible to Frank's loving gaze, as her unresisting hand lay clasped in his.

Still silence. No words. Only the communion of their hearts. Darker grew the shades of

evening, and night was fast spreading her terror-inspiring wings over the face of earth. The evening sounds grew fainter and fainter, and died away; while from a dark cloud the summer lightning began to flicker and dart, showing the configuration of the vapour from which it played. Darker and darker still; and now for the first time for many years, and as though to protect the fair girl by his side, did Frank's arm encircle her waist. Thus drawn towards him, timidly, half-resisting, but lovingly, the maiden's form was pressed to his breast, and her head rested upon his shoulder, while he could feel his cheek fanned by her breath as the question now first asked received a reply—gently fanned as Madeline murmured the words—

"For ever!"

"You'd better shut the window, my dears; for it's growing damp, and if we send Miss Glebeley away with a bad cold we shall not be allowed to have her here again;" and Mrs. Elton bustled into the room hugging herself so that her heart

should not burst with its dearest wish so gratified. She had come coughing and rustling her silk down the passage, but no one had heard her till she opened the door.

"There," she exclaimed, lighting the candles; "I've been so long showing that girl how to tie down the preserves. I didn't mean to stay, and I'm sure Miss Glebeley must think me very rude; but girls are so stupid now. They used to be of some use, but if they go on as they have done, getting worse and worse year after year, I quite pity the young married people who are to come!"

Here Mrs. Elton stopped, and had a quiet chuckle to herself; thinking what a pungent shaft of witticism she had sent stinging at the young people.

"You see, my dear," she continued, "girls now-a-days won't think;—yes; draw the blind close, Frank, or the people can see quite plainly from out of the road;—they will not think of what they are doing. I told that girl to pour out

some brandy in a saucer, and I've been cutting out the round pieces of foolscap paper, dipping them in the saucer, and showing her how to put them on the top of the jam, and then how to tie them down, just as I have shown her every season for the last fifteen or twenty years. You know, Miss Glebeley, it's as fine raspberry jam as you ever saw, and fortunately, as I was doing it, I made my fingers just a little sticky, and of course put them in my mouth; when—only think! if it was not raspberry vinegar, for the stupid thing had filled the saucer out of the vinegar bottle instead of with brandy."

"And drunk the spirit, mamma?" said Frank.

"Nonsense, child, no," said Mrs. Elton. "Why, you know she won't even touch mead. But it was so provoking; and there I had to do all my work over again, for I had finished ever so many pots."

Now all this was most dreadfully transparent of Mrs. Elton, but then elderly ladies are so fond of a little match-making. She liked Madeline

Glebeley, as being the only girl she thought sufficiently good for her son, whom she considered to be far superior to Crichton the admirable; while of course she would not have come back any sooner even if it had not been for the vinegar incident. And in all this she showed herself to be a most terrible old humbug—strong as the term may appear to apply to a middle-aged lady —but then there is no more suitable or expressive word of a refined character at the present moment in the writer's vocabulary, so it must stand.

Mrs. Elton reasoned with herself after this wise :—

"I'm sure they don't want me there, so I'll leave them together for an hour. She's a sweet girl, and I suppose I must let matters take their course." A remark which was hardly fair, after the way in which mother had spoken to son but a short time before. "It quite makes me think of old times!" Here Mrs. Elton stopped, and let fall a great salt-water tear plump upon one of the jam-pot drum-heads, and had to re-cover

it with fresh paper. "I declare," she continued, "it makes one envious; but then it's of no use, for Mr. E. never was tender and gentle and that sort of thing; and even if I were to be gentle and loving to him, or hint at anything of the sort, he would not know what it meant, but call me stupid and weak, and I suppose I am rather. But I declare, now I come to think of it, he has never sat with his arm round my waist but once since we were married."

However, the bustling duties of the preserving department put a stop to Mrs. Elton's train of thought, or doubtless it would have gone on without let or hindrance at express speed. But Mrs. Elton was not a model mother. As in the days of Noah, people marry and are given in marriage, and of course have to go through all the necessary preliminaries; but, as a general rule, suitors do not meet with such reprehensible parents as Mrs. Elton and the Reverend Charles Glebeley. For of course it was not right for Frank Henderson to be sitting alone with Madeline in the dusk of

a summer's eve, and the straggling hairs of all the old scandal-mongers within a circuit of twenty miles would have risen with horror had they known it; and what would have happened could they have seen all that occurred, this chronicler knoweth not. For just at the duskiest time, when Nature was whispering so of love in those fragrant breaths that came softly through the window—just then——

Shall I tell it? shall I make known what every right-minded person must consider as shocking?

Just then Frank was trying in the dusk to gaze into Madeline's eyes for a confirmation of those words "for ever," when their lips met in the first long clinging kiss of love—that kiss which is never kissed again; and then, trembling and blushing, Madeline had shrunk away to hide her face in her hands as Mrs. Elton came into the room.

Query—Did Mrs. Elton see?

## CHAPTER XII.

### STRICTLY EDUCATIONAL.

WAVELEY National School, nine o clock, and the children assembled. According to custom, Mr. Boreham had stumped up to his desk, carefully wiped his glasses, frowned silence, and prepared for the reading of the morning prayers, when the door opened, and the gaunt figure of the new curate entered.

He bowed slightly and condescendingly to the master, waved him from his place, and then, taking the vacant desk, prepared to read the prayers himself, much to the discomfiture of Timothy Boreham, who had always been accustomed to show off before his boys as master of his own school, and, like Dr. Busby, he would not have bowed to a king in the presence of his scholars, who looked upon him as a man far

greater than the rector. But this seemed like an act of deposition to the master, who appeared very uncomfortable and rather out of place kneeling with the undamaged leg upon one of the forms. He had seen his visitor at church, and also at the schools on the previous Sunday; but then he came merely as a visitor; but now, upon seeing the quite-at-home manners of the curate, Mr. Boreham felt that to a certain extent he was to resign the seals of office into the stranger's hands; and after the reading of the prayers, followed him demurely amongst the rows of little upturned faces, as the Reverend Augustus Newman made a tour of the school-room.

"Oh! er-er, Mister—er-er," said the curate.

"Boreham, sir," said the master.

"Oh! er-er—Mr. Boreham, which is your first class?"

"That one, sir," said the master, pointing to a row of little hes and shes sitting upon a very low form, but whose short bare legs were

dangling about some inches from the red-tiled floor, and whose average ages might have been four-and-a-half.

"Oh—er, tha-a-ank you," said the curate, approaching class one, just as a curly-headed imp was reaching behind his neighbour and lugging the hair of the next door but one; and then, conscience-stricken as he saw the tall figure in black approaching, he shrank back, with arms extended to ward off the expected cuff, half-whimpering, and exclaiming, as he pointed to another curly-headed urchin,—

"Please, sir, it's him!"

Just then a favour-seeker drew attention to a boy by pulling the curate's long skirt and pointing out the delinquent's feet, which wore the appearance of having been blacked with whitewash.

"He've been tchortin's boots," said the tale-bearer.

One little morsel seemed to read punishment in the curate's stern features, for he began to rub his eyes with both fists preparatory to a

howl; while another, with a thirst for knowledge that was not to be awed even by the presence of his master and a dignitary of the Church, was studying the aspect of the school by hooking his hands upon the form, hanging head downwards, and gazing beneath the seat, thus gaining a view in reverse, without the aid of a concave mirror, but at the expense of a convexity upon his *os frontis*.

"Biddle!" cried Mr. Boreham, sternly.

"Bump!" said Biddle, loosing his hold, and coming down with his head in sharp contact with the floor, after which he yelled with dismay and pain.

"Oh-er-er! Did you say this was your first class, Mr. Borer?"

"Yes, sir," said the master, trying to pacify the injured Biddle, and at last compelled, out of self-defence, to send him into the lane to be walked up and down by an elder boy till the noise was abated. "Yes, sir; we always place them in the lowest class, and then let

them work upwards to the seventh, which is the highest."

"Oh—er! allow me, Mr. Borely; not at all a good plan. You had better——"

"Now, Muster Boreham, if *you* please," said a red-faced woman, noisily entering the school-room, unannounced except by the unhappy Biddle, whom she pushed in before her. She also carried a smaller Biddle in her arms, the relationship being declared by the most prominent feature in its face, while the mouth was slightly distorted in consequence of its partaking of nutriment from the maternal fount, laid bare for him after the mode immortalised by Sir Peter Lely or Sir Godfrey Kneller—a mode not much admired in these days—that is, for morning costume.

Mrs. Biddle—for that was the lady in question—did not wear a very tidy appearance about the hair, for, in addition to its being in the state called touzly, her dirty cap was half off; while, as to her dress, it was difficult to say whether it was most dirty or most ragged.

"Now, Mr. Boreham, if *you* please," said Mrs. Biddle, who then stopped short upon seeing the astonished curate. "Ho! I didn't know as you had company; but I want to know why my child is to be ill-used in this here way?"

"My good woman," said the curate, loftily, "your child fell down."

"Then," said Mrs. Biddle, "I'll keep him at home, where he will be properly attended to;" and away she whisked the howling Biddle, and banged the door after her, leaving Mr. Boreham in a cold perspiration.

"——better," continued the curate from the point where he left off, "better at once change the plan, and let the first class be the first. Do you see—er?"

"Oh, certainly, sir, if you wish it," said Mr. Boreham; "but Mr. Glebeley——"

"Oh, allow me," said the curate, with dignity. "The Reverend Charles Glebeley has placed the superintendence of the schools entirely in my hands, and I must beg that such references

may never again be made. All applications for advice, or respecting alterations, must in future be made to me."

Mr. Boreham bowed grimly, and placed his hands beneath his coat-tails, which were rough from the accumulation of ink, for the good man scorned the little jig-jag pieces of cloth known as pen-wipers; he then elevated his eye-brows, and sighed within himself,—a sigh which was redoubled in intensity after the curate had been in the school for half an hour; for that gentleman announced that he was about to communicate with the proper authorities, and that a visit from the Government inspector might be expected at his next round.

The classes were examined turn by turn, with a grim, searching, mission-like aspect worn upon the curate's face; and little notes were taken with a little pencil upon little tablets, headed with the various subjects upon which the children had been questioned; and at last the first, late seventh, class was put to the ordeal at a time when Mr.

Boreham was in an agony of vexation from the inability of the children to answer with promptitude the strange questions put to them in a strange voice by a strange person, and the poor master had scratched his head so viciously that his ordinarily smooth hair looked quite frightened.

If not answering questions which they could not understand was the gauge by which the six classes were to be measured, they had certainly acquitted themselves very badly, and so Mr. Boreham thought—hence his uneasiness; but his troubles were not yet ended, for, sitting down in a most business-like way, the Reverend Augustus proceeded to take this last and highest class in hand.

In the first place, the curate gave them a searching series of questions on tables of all kinds, and the master brightened up as the answers came forth quickly and to the purpose; but the reading would not do at all: the boys had a very bad pronunciation; their *u*'s were either too flat or too sharp; and as to the *r*'s,

the burr upon them was dreadful, and must be altered.

"And, Mr. Boreham," said the curate, "I must have less noise in the rest of the school."

The master called for silence, and obtained it; for the school had certainly not been so quiet as usual, from the fact of his being so wrapped up in the examination that he saw nothing else.

Then came the Scriptural and Liturgical questions; when one boy said that Jephthah was the father-in-law of Moses; another, that the children of Israel fasted forty days and forty nights in the wilderness; another named Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John as four of the twelve patriarchs. No one had ever heard of Socinus, nor Justin Martyr; but St. Chrysostom was the man who had seven champions. No one knew where the Areopagus was, nor yet what was the meaning of the word heresy; while the climax was placed upon the examiner's disgust when a small boy eagerly said there were three articles of religion *a*, *an*, and *the*.

Mr. Newman could stand no more that day, but rose with lips tightly compressed and head shaking solemnly, and told the boys that they had much to learn yet. Which was quite true, and a very unnecessary remark; for Mr. Boreham knew it well, although, in spite of irregular attendance—parents considering it a favour to send their children—dull brains, and a few other difficulties, he had been driving all the useful knowledge he could into the children in as direct a manner as was possible. But now all was to be changed, and he should probably have to go to the wall to make room for new institutions, new teachings, and new methods—new machinery altogether, that would render him and his ideas obsolete. His train of musing was, however, broken by the approach of the Reverend Augustus, tablets in hand, who, with a great deal of importance and dignified speech, requested him to fill up some of the vacancies he had observed in the teaching of the children.

"You see, Mr.—er-er Boreham, I find that

in many points there is a want of basis in the educational constitution of the children. I do not wish to particularise these points too finely, but will leave it to your good sense to endeavour to make up for this—er-er extremely low state of the school; for perhaps I had better say it, I—er-er never in the whole course of my experience entered a school where so much ignorance was displayed. *Good* morning, Mr. Boreham; you will find me a regular attendant, as I take great interest in schools. GOOD morning."

The boys all rose and made a discharge of hand-flourishing bows, while Mr. Timothy Boreham mechanically followed the divine to the door, and then stumped back to his desk. He then wiped his damp forehead with the chalk-duster, put the ruler in his pocket, and, sitting down with his wooden leg projecting at right angles, propped his elbows upon the desk, his chin upon his hands, and gazed right away through the white-washed wall before him at the panorama of his own ordinary life. The work

of the school came almost to a stansdtill; furtive games of "noughts and crosses" were indulged in; fancy sketches of the master—wooden leg not forgotten, but slightly exaggerated—were made; a chalk drawing of the late visitor, in a very stiff and angular frock-coat, made its appearance upon the black board; but still there was no movement upon the master's part. The noise grew fast and furious, lulled, died away; increased in a perfect *crescendo,* until musical folk would have written it down with half-a-dozen *f*'s; but the stolid stare at the white-washed wall lasted until twelve o'clock, when the children dismissed themselves. Thoughts far back into the past; thoughts far, far into the future; childhood; boyhood; school; the teacher taught; early manhood; accident; agonised nerves; hospital, with a pale youth anxiously gazing from face to face of the stern men around him; a father with quivering lip, and then the operation; life trembling for days in the balance; the gradual recovery of strength, till, out once more, earth

seemed brighter than ever; school years gliding on in calm, unbroken repose; married life; children; grey hairs; and then, after years and years of earnest effort,—after watching child after child grow into the smart servant lass or sturdy labourer, always ready to salute "old master" with a smile and curtsey or a pull at the forelock,—now, after all—obsolete—school in a bad state—Government inspector—constant visitor.

"What's the use?" said the master at last, addressing the round-faced Dutch clock, which kept staring hard at him, and pointing to a quarter to one; "what's the use? I dare say they are more clever and learned than I am. But then they can't get university men to teach village schools for fifty pounds a year; and such men as I do our best. Answer questions! of course they don't, poor things, when put in what sounds to them almost like a foreign tongue. How could any one judge of the state of my school by an hour's questioning, without the knack of drawing

the answers out of the boys? 'Give me dates for some of the principal events in English history.' Dear, dear; the boys stared, and well they might, at such a question, for I never taught the poor fellows dates any more than I taught them the chapters or verses, or numbers of the pages they were reading.

"Dear, dear," sighed Mr. Boreham again, as with heavy heart he slowly dismounted from his throne and stumped back to the snug dinner that Mrs. Boreham had prepared for him; but he could not eat, for the edge of his appetite had been completely blunted for that day, even though there was a dish of late peas from the rectory garden.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### A SORE POINT.

"A CONFOUNDED humbug, Steve; I haven't patience with the fellow, patronising me before all the people at the Rectory, as if I were a schoolboy. But there, it's of no use growling; there's a regular set of these uncomfortable fellows about. I expect they have a regular hatching-bed for them at Oxford, and then they come out with a mission to revive everything, from a boot up to a code of morality. I verily believe they would interfere with an old woman stocking-darning, and try to show her a new way. Reverend Augustus Newman, I should like to have you for a month in our set upon the Cam! But surely Mr. Glebely will never keep him; he'll set the whole place by the ears."

"Oh, never mind," was the reply. "I want to take a turn or two round after the hawks, for they are murdering the young pheasants wholesale. Step out."

The above fragment of a conversation took place as Frank and Stephen Vaughan were walking down the Hall avenue, when they leaped the ring-fence, crossed the lawn, and entered the drawing-room by one of the French windows—innovations introduced in place of the old leaden casements by Mrs. Vaughan. Frank had been quite at home at the Hall from a boy, and now, with Stephen's wiry terrier at their heels, the young men entered the room, when the first thing that met their gaze was, as Stephen Vaughan afterwards indignantly expressed it, "the devil himself"—that is to say, the Reverend Augustus Newman, propounding some fresh theory to Mrs. Vaughan and Alice; the former lady seeming very ill-at-ease, while upon the young men entering the room the eyes of the latter twinkled maliciously.

The curate was sitting very upright upon a

low *prie-Dieu* chair, with his knees forming a sharp angle, when the new comers arrived; and after the customary salutations, he reseated himself, a proceeding rather ungraciously followed by Frank and Stephen, while Bob, the terrier, proceeded to smell the visitor all over as far as he could reach, twitching his ears the while, and looking at him very suspiciously, with the same sideway glance that he bestowed upon any one of the gipsy fraternity or sisterhood, concluding his inspection, to the intense delight of the more mischievous part of the company, by touching the limp, white hand of the Reverend Augustus with a cold, wet nose, thereby greatly disturbing the visitor's equanimity, and making him chop a sentence respecting clothing-clubs right in half.

But in spite of his sharp jump, the visitor immediately recovered his composure, and Bob was sent outside the window, a proceeding against which he protested with a howl. A few passing remarks were then made, and the visitor took his departure, leaving Alice making a

grimace and wiping her shaken hand upon her pocket-handkerchief.

Mrs. Vaughan gave a sigh of relief as the tall, gaunt figure was seen striding down the avenue, and then exclaimed :—

"It's of no use, my dear: if I'm charitable, it really must be after my own fashion; and really, Alice, I don't much like the idea of your turning district visitor."

"Alice turning what?" growled Stephen.

"Why, my dear," said Mrs. Vaughan, "the Reverend Mr. Newman wishes us to assist him in visiting the poor—of course, under his direction; and I'm sure he seems a very good young man, and very earnest. He is getting up a fresh coal-club, and clothing-club, and I don't know what beside; all very good things, no doubt, but he does not seem to me to have a happy way with him."

"And pray, has he made a convert of my charming sister?" said Stephen.

"Of course he has, sir," replied that young lady, tartly, "and I'm going to—— No, I'm

not, mamma dear," she continued, seeing the dismayed look her mother had put on. "I have no patience with the man, and I declare my hand feels quite damp and sticky now, after shaking hands with him."

"Come, that's cheering," said Frank. "I was about to add a postscript to the letter I'm writing to Tom Phipps, imploring him to come down and help us while we try to rescue you from a fall into all kinds of strong-minded-womanisms. Why, Steve, I was looking down a perspective of the future, and seeing a little lady of our acquaintance in blue spectacles, whittle shawl, and clogs, and armed with an umbrella and a big Berlin wool worked bag full of interesting tracts and teething-powders ——"

"Accompanied by another lady in similar costume, and of similar habits of life, named Madeline Glebeley," exclaimed Alice, interrupting him.

"Saints forbid!" cried Frank; "but there, I give up. I've registered a vow that I will never

more engage in controversy with Miss Alice Vaughan. There are no laurels to be gained—nothing more agreeable than nettles. So I cry you mercy, and now, Steve, for our shooting."

"Ah! come along," said Stephen. "And I say, Alice—I mean Frank, don't you wish Tom was here?"

There was a light box on the ear for Stephen, as his sister tripped by him and out of the room; and a few minutes after, with arms shouldered, and to the unbounded delight of Bob, the young men were on their way to the wood. On the road they encountered the Squire, spittle-staff in hand, upon the summit of which he rested his chin till they came up, when he saluted them with:—

"Has that parson chap gone?" and upon receiving a reply in the affirmative, rubbed his nose, saying,—"I tell you what it is, Frank Henderson, if you are going to bring any of those make-home-a-nuisance ideas from college, about visiting and that sort of thing, just keep out of my way."

"Don't be alarmed," said Frank, laughing.

"No, I don't mean to be," said the old gentleman, laughing in his turn and nodding his head. "Why didn't you bring him out and lend him a gun?"

Stephen Vaughan had no good and sufficient reason to give, so he merely smiled and walked on, closely followed by Frank, when they passed the lane in silence, and entered the wood. But in spite of Stephen Vaughan's assumed gaiety, it was evident that something was preying upon his mind. There had been occasional fits of coolness between the young men; but they soon passed off, from the intense desire shown to be friendly; while latterly, Frank, feeling assured of the prize they both sought, had cast all jealous feeling to the winds, and was ready to sympathise with his friend, if he would accept his sympathy. They had been together for some little time that afternoon, and Frank had passed over several little slights and displays of temper, that at another time might have brought on a serious quarrel; but he could pity his friend, and at last, in the

depth of the wood, it was almost with a feeling of remorse that he saw Stephen lean against an oak, and then hesitating at first, but growing bolder as he went on, Frank listened, while with half-averted face, Stephen said, in husky tones,—

"Frank, old fellow, we've been good friends together for a long time, and it hurts me that anything should come between us. I did once think that we should be brothers; but that is all gone by now, and it seems that we are both running in the same track, and are to be enemies."

"But," exclaimed Frank, eagerly, "is that my seeking? You must have——"

"Stop!" cried Stephen, harshly; "hear me out. I have not much to say, but—but—— There, Frank, there's my hand. I'm no speaker, and I can't say what I want; but you know what I mean. Let's have fair play," he continued, huskily. "I am no hypocrite. I tell you I love Madeline Glebeley more than ever you can. But I have heard two or three things to-day, that have unsettled me. I could not

speak about it when we first met, but I want you to tell me that it is all a lie—village gossip—for there is a report that you and Miss Glebeley are to be engaged."

There was some few minutes' silence in that deep woodland glade, during which Frank's brow flushed, and he felt that resentment at being questioned was taking possession of his mind. He was about to answer angrily, but his better nature prevailed, and laying his hand upon his companion's shoulder, he slowly said,—

"It is quite true, Steve!"

Stephen Vaughan started as though Frank had struck a steel blade into his breast. He wrenched himself away, and stood with vein-knotted brow and lowering looks, while the gun he held shook in his powerful grasp. But the paroxysm passed off in a few moments, and with the dew standing upon his forehead he turned round to speak, when rage again seemed to take possession of his heart, and clenching his disengaged hand, he hissed out,—

"D—n you, Frank, this is not fair! You have half-broken my poor sister's heart, and now you would rob me. But I am no weak boy. I can act as well as you; and I tell you that I will fight to the last gasp for her. Mark me, while I have life I'll never give——"

"Are you mad, Steve Vaughan?" exclaimed Frank, sternly.

"I believe I am—God knows I believe I am, Frank," groaned the poor fellow, breaking down and speaking thickly. "I must be." And then he leaned his head upon his arm against an oak, and trembled with the emotion which shook him. At last, with averted head, he said: "There, leave me now, Frank, I'm not all right. Go away, there's a good fellow; I don't want to be ill friends. I'm not myself this afternoon—and—and—there, I'm a fool, I know, but I didn't mean you to see it!" And then, thoroughly breaking down, the stalwart fellow paced up and down the glade, as if suffering some violent and bitter pang.

Frank Henderson felt in anything but a happy frame of mind. He was hurt by the words addressed to him, and yet sorry to see his old friend's humbled condition; than have witnessed which he would rather have met his anger. But he felt helpless to offer consolation, for he knew that a woman's hand should have been the one laid upon Stephen Vaughan's shoulder—the broad shoulder now heaving with suppressed emotion. But at last he grasped him by the arm, and turning farther into the wood they walked slowly together down one of the deepest alleys.

It might have been five, ten, twenty minutes after, or an hour; but it was while standing together beneath a huge beech that Frank said, in a low voice,—

"Steve, mine should not be the lips to talk of hopefulness to one who has suffered your loss; but we must be friends. You must bear this like a man, and as God knows I would have tried to bear it had you passed me in the race.

Steve, old fellow, I would have done what you will do this night when you are alone—prayed for *her* happiness. I have used no unfair advantage. It has been between us—— But, there; we are friends, are we not? They are scarce enough, and after many years' trial, we cannot afford to lightly part with them. Steve, you forgive?"

Stephen Vaughan nodded.

"From your heart?" said Frank.

Stephen nodded again; but the moment after his face changed. A wild fury seemed to come over him, and seizing his companion by the throat they wrestled together, swaying backwards and forwards, till Frank tripped, when, wtih an almost superhuman effort, Stephen Vaughan dashed him back, so that his head came in contact with a beech trunk, and he fell stunned and bleeding to the ground.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE CONSEQUENCES OF A TRESPASS.

It was an undeniable fact that the lanes round Waveley supplied scraps of rustic scenery that would have given satisfaction to the most scrupulous artist. Of course, one is ready to own that it was very bad farming to leave great, tall, ragged hedges, with every here and there pollards or spreading oaks. These ought all to have been cut down and turned into hard cash, and the hedges reduced to a height that would have prompted the passer-by to say they might just as well have been entirely removed. However, they were not model farmers round Waveley, and did not make a point of sending in the ploughshare right to the very edge of the ditch and utilising every scrap of land; and, besides, the landlords

were most staunch preservers of game, for whose especial behoof covers were needed. So the lovers of scenery—that is to say, miniature scenery, for Waveley boasted neither defile nor gorge, mountain, precipice, nor chasm — the lovers of pretty English scenery had a fine opportunity for filling their portfolios with sketches. Copse, spring, and wood; plantation, gorse land, and brake; sandrock, and high, martin-pierced bank; large double hedges full of gnarled pollards and stumps; there were plenty of gathering places for the lordly pheasant, and temptations enough for men of the Bill Graves stamp.

But there was also plenty of temptation for the lover of nature—and when was not a light-hearted, bright-eyed maiden a lover of nature, as of everything else beautiful and good?—which is probably the reason why she leans so lovingly upon some big-whiskered he sooner or later. Annie Newman was a lover of nature, and as her brother could not be tempted beyond the last

house in the parish, nor yet in leisure hours to quit St. Thomas à Kempis, she used in despair to stroll off by herself, making numberless pretty little discoveries in her rambles. She was very girlish though in these solitary walks, and did all manner of unbecoming things; such as climbing gates and stiles unaided; leaping ditches to pick wildflowers, or secure specimens of nutgall, briony, or traveller's joy; while it is a fact that she one day returned to her brother's august—that is to say, her brother Augustus's presence, with a nose of a more decidedly purple hue than that of their landlady, Miss Cinques; and then, when the curate remonstrated, she tripped to the glass, and burst——

Into tears?

No; into a hearty fit of laughter, saying,—

"Oh! Gus, you should have come—there were such delicious dewberries in the deep dell!"

Well might her brother sigh, and write home that he thought it would be better for Annie if

she returned to the paternal nest, as she daily grew more wild and unmanageable.

Still Annie Newman did not depart, for she began to like Waveley, in spite of an adventure which befel her one day during her wanderings—an adventure apparently of no moment in itself, but one of sufficient importance to alter the current of two human natures from the directions in which they had flowed, and to set up a ripple in the one case, and somewhat of an eddy in the other.

As it fell upon a day, Love, whose month was not always May, nor any other month in particular; for we have all known as desperate stabs to be given in the depth of winter as in the sunniest or rainiest months,—well, as it fell upon a day, Love, or something else, must have decoyed Annie Newman down the crooked lane, and over the gate into one of old Squire Vaughan's meadows—a particularly pretty meadow, bounded on three sides with woodland, and margined upon the fourth by the winding

river, where, plashing about in the shallows, the cattle were collected beneath the pollard willows, seeking in vain for protection against the winged torments which pestered them.

'Twas indeed a pretty field, one well worthy of being made the subject of a sketch; for the emerald turf seemed framed, as it were, in the richly-shaded greens of the wood—here bright and golden, and there deepening almost into black where the firs peered out; while the hedges, which formed the division between wood and field, were teeming with their ripening harvest of seed-vessel and fruity berry. It was a pleasant place for a stroll, and so thought Annie Newman, who wandered "in maiden meditation fancy free," fit presiding nymph for such a scene. She passed up one side of the field—here picking a flower, and there a berry; sometimes even to the damaging of her pretty little white fingers, for rough Briareus could not let so tempting a hand pass him without making a snatch thereat. Now it was a feathery tuft for her hedgeside bouquet

which tempted the maiden to pause; or, again, one of the clustering grape-like bunches of the tendrilled briony or ebon-hued privet. Anon, some gorgeously-feathered pheasant stood with raised crest gazing at the intruder ere he startled her with the loud whirr of his wings, as he rose perpendicularly for a few yards, and then skimmed into the woody covert.

Plenty to see; plenty to admire; and the light breeze seemed to think so, too, as it now and then lifted one of the dark curls descending from the little coquettish brown hat, and resting upon the rambler's shoulder—a rambler almost more dangerous to meet than one of the feline beauties of a tropic jungle—while after an encounter, one always feels tempted to bless the man who invented veils!

Two sides of the wood-bounded prairie were passed, and quite a suitable spot for a woodland throne reached, in an angle where a great oak stretched forth a leafy arm over the meadow, as though in token of ownership as monarch of the

fields and glades. But there was no throne there, so Annie Newman stood gazing into the deep shade before her—listening to the low hum of the insects, and negligently allowing that creamy white parasol to rest upon her shoulder—the parasol which proved so fruitful a cause of dissension when brought out upon the first Sunday at Waveley, when "Gus" said his sister "ought to blush to carry so meretricious a piece of folly." Those were the very words, and I know as a fact that they brought the tears into the maiden's eyes, and caused her to put the parasol away, and walk to church without one, although the sun was blazing in her face all the way, and made the said face smart so that its owner sat through the service spoiling her nails by biting them down to the quick—a popular and very maidenly way of displaying anger and annoyance.

All at once Annie's reverie was brought to a conclusion by a loud snort just behind her; and on turning her head, to her great dismay,

she found that the cattle she had last noticed standing quietly in the river, had approached in a well-ordered line which completely hemmed her in the corner, and seemed to preclude all chance of escape.

Annie Newman's first idea was that the thirty or so enemies were all bulls; and the second was that they were all mad, and that she would be gored to death; for as she backed farther into the corner, so they followed her slowly up, closer and closer, until her cheek turned pale as her parasol, only of a much prettier pallor, and her heart died within her as she wondered what would come next, and wished, oh, so devoutly! that the great Hercules-like fellow she had seen from her window, and at church, were by her side. It would have been some comfort, she thought, even to have had Gus, though her heart told her that he would not have been of much service.

But the maiden was wrong in her ideas—wrong, to begin with, in wishing for a big, fine-

looking young man to be at her side to the disparagement of her brother; wrong about the animals before her, for they were not bulls, neither were they mad; for they were simply a collection of heifers—sportive young maidenly cows—which Squire Vaughan had purchased at Edgeton and Ramsford markets, and then turned out to graze.

The softer sex always was gifted, or troubled, with that attribute called curiosity; and though I never felt the bumps of a heifer's head—in fact, never prosecuted my researches in that direction beyond the head of the calf, and that in a cooked condition—still it always appears that heifers are beyond all other animals troubled with a desire to know what's what. If a strange dog enters the pasture, they are after him directly, sometimes to their own discomfiture, if the dog be courageous, but in most instances to drive the intruder sneaking out of their domain with his tail between his legs—he not staying sufficiently long to satisfy the curiosity of

the bevy of horned heads which remain stretched out over hedge, fence, or gate, in the direction he has taken.

As with the dog, so with everything else which comes within the scope of the heiferine vision; and therefore it was not surprising that the Squire's cattle should be astounded at the sight of a creamy-looking hemisphere going slowly up the field on the top of a body; for neither head nor shoulders were visible. It was not therefore surprising that first one and then another of the light young creatures should elevate her caudal appendage, until it stood out in a line with the rest of the vertebræ; or, where the animal was more excited, in a perpendicular position, where it remained, while there were sundry shakings of the head, and imaginary tossings, with occasional clumsy leaps off the ground. With some of the animals an idea seemed to be prevalent that it was a gigantic turnip brought for their especial delectation and use, and these were mostly disposed to close in quickly; but judging from the

expression of countenance exhibited, blank curiosity was the prevailing feeling.

So as the heifers hemmed in Annie Newman, that young lady wished—oh, so earnestly!—that the tall Hercules was by her side.

Now Annie Newman's must have been a much more highly favoured fate than that of the general run of mankind, for few among us find wishing for things of much avail; but somehow or another this young lady's desire enjoyed fruition, for just as she was coming to the conclusion that one of the most frisky of her assailants was about to impale her,—so closely had it approached,—she gave a long and loud cry for help, which was directly followed by a quick trampling and crashing noise in the wood behind her, and immediately after, in a sort of misty dream, Annie Newman saw a figure burst through the hedge, and the cattle ignobly take to flight; and then, poor girl, she saw no more until, with a horribly sickly, deathly sensation upon her, she opened her eyes again, and found

that she was reclining upon the grass, with her head resting upon the arm of Hercules himself, who was leaning over her with his hat off, and fanning her cheek with its wide brim.

She ought to have screamed again and jumped up, backed three yards, and then, in the tragic tones of outraged innocence, have exclaimed,—

"*Sir!*"

But she did not; for in the faintness and thankfulness of feeling at finding herself in safety, and with him for a protector, Annie Newman could but gently close her eyes again, and sigh —feeling *so* happy and resigned; but directly after, a blush began to mantle in her cheek, and she thought of what Augustus would say; and again, directly after, sundry ideas of maidenly reserve, which had been driven away by the fright, returned with a rush, and, taking possession of the damsel's soul, made her get up and thank, warmly 'tis true, her welcome visitor for his timely assistance, just as any other young lady would have done.

Now, big as he was, Stephen Vaughan did not come under the denomination of *gauche*. There was a great deal of Nature's gentleman in him; and although he would much rather have stayed upon one knee supporting that prettily shaped head, with a perfect cascade of beautiful hair flowing over his arm, while he fanned that pallid cheek—now so rosy; yet he took the proper course in a moment, and the little hand extended to him at the same time; listened to the prettily worded thanks; and then, shouldering his gun, walked by the maiden's side, taking as much notice of the heifers as though they had been flies, and only smiling and saying a few encouraging words as his companion pressed closer to him when they passed the herd.

The gate reached, Stephen came in for another treat in the helping of Annie over that obstacle; for, nimble as are young ladies in such cases when alone, it is surprising how awkward and helpless they become when in masculine company. However, Annie was assisted up the

gate, and then had to jump off the top bar, Stephen landing her as easily as though she had been a child; and then there was such a pleasant stroll down the lane, for Stephen could chat upon wild bee, bird, and flower, and that too rather enthusiastically; but what wonder in such a case as this?

But, in fine, the gentleman received the last thanks and his *congé*, while Annie Newman tripped off with heightened colour, and soon entered Miss Cinque's mansion, feeling very naughty, and flushed, and disposed to cry. For why, she could not tell, as, to her knowledge, she had done nothing wrong. But then she had been touched; there had been a big man's arm round her neck and amongst her curls; and, as she stood before the glass in her little room arranging those curls, she tugged at them with the comb, and brushed them viciously. She wetted her cheeks with cold water again and again, and let the soft piece of sponge kiss them for long enough, but they only looked worse,

and then they flushed deeper in hue, for she remembered all at once how she had wished for Hercules the Strong, and how he had come directly.

The tempest was terrible, and she threw herself down upon her knees by the bedside, and leaned her forehead against the cool pillow.

But then he was so like an old Saxon hero, and looked so handsome and sympathising when she first opened her eyes, and—and——. But how dared he to touch her? And then the little cheeks flamed up again, and the dark eyes flashed dreadfully. It was sacrilege—perfect sacrilege; and at last, in her anger, the maiden had a good cry—a proceeding which terminated in the eyes growing as red about the lids as the cheeks were already, and in such a headache that the tea had but little effect, even when partaken of in such soothing society as that of her brother.

## CHAPTER XV.

### QUERY, WHICH ROAD?

AFTER parting with Miss Newman, Stephen directed his steps homeward, and walked away something like a rhinoceros with a spear poked through his thick hide and viciously tickling the tender parts beneath. He ruminated over the adventure, and seemed to think that, although no fealty was owing, yet every thought directed elsewhere was treason to Madeline Glebeley. But then what a face! what hair! what eyes! and what a sigh she gave when she found herself out of danger; and of course, "she" was not Madeline. How sweet to have stayed there for hours, fanning those pale cheeks, and watching the faint flush come back!

"Heigho!" sighed Stephen Vaughan, and then, "What a fool I am!" quoth he. Directly

after he strode along by a copse side, and murdered an unfortunate magpie, by giving it the contents of both barrels of his gun; picked up the poor unfortunate—banned for stealing partridge and pheasant eggs—loaded, and then began thinking again about Madeline Glebeley to such an extent that his face flamed up scarlet as he turned a corner, and ran up against Frank Henderson, who stopped for a few moments talking upon indifferent subjects in a very amicable way, considering that the last time we saw the young men together, Frank was dashed bleeding to the ground; but then some time had since passed—time enough for Stephen to apologise for his mad fit, and for Frank, who could afford to be large-hearted, to forgive.

But still there was a sore place in each gentleman, and they did not meet as they had been accustomed some six months before; although they made a studious show of friendliness. So very soon Frank continued his route, and Stephen went on towards the Hall.

"How preciously flushed and agitated he seemed on meeting me," said Frank to himself. "What's he going to do? I'll walk round the spinney, and see if he goes on home. No, I won't—it looks so mean and spy-like. But I might go round that way though, anyhow." And the consequence was, that Frank Henderson, having weak points in his composition, like other men, walked a little way, and then leaped a gate, and strolled round by the back of a little wood, where he would soon come in sight of the Hall, and the old avenue leading towards it.

"He's going to meet her, curse him!" groaned Stephen Vaughan, forgetting, in an instant, the whole of his afternoon's adventure. "I wonder which way he'll go. Perhaps across the fields. I'll go round by the back of the spinney. No, I won't—it would be so contemptible to watch him, and he might see me."

Stephen Vaughan walked on for twenty yards, and then muttered again,—

"I'd give anything to see her for ten minutes,

even at a distance. I don't want to watch him; I don't want to see him again." So Stephen walked on a little farther to leap a low hedge; go round by the back of the spinney; and singe his wings a little more in the light of Madeline Glebeley's eyes—of course ten times more ardent now that they were fed with a reciprocated love.

There was a sharp corner at the back of the dense wood; and five minutes after, Frank Henderson and Stephen Vaughan ran up against one another again, to their mutual disgust and chagrin.

"Halloa!" said Frank, with a face like a blushing girl.

"Halloa!" said Stephen, grumpily.

"Thought I'd go round home this way," said Frank.

"You didn't pick up a wood-pigeon, did you?" said Stephen—"winged, I think."

"No, I didn't," said Frank, glancing at the capped nipples of Stephen's gun.

Stephen saw the look, and stammered out, "Hard birds to kill."

"Very, I believe," said Frank, drily. "Didn't hear you fire."

"Didn't you?" said Stephen.

"No," said Frank.

"Afternoon," said Stephen.

"Good afternoon," said Frank. And after this highly entertaining conversation, the young men parted once more, each gnawing his heart, and calling himself a mean humbug for the bit of deceit he had practised in so bungling a manner.

Ten minutes after, Stephen was at home, where he devoured a huge meat-tea, and forgot for the time all about love, and stings, and darts, and the rest of it; and no wonder—for, unknown to him, his heart had met with the first dressing of a natural healing treatment—rather sharp, perhaps, but decidedly salutary. In fact, with all due respect for allopathy—the treatment was decidedly homœopathic—*similia similibus*

*curantur*—a case of like curing like. But so deep a wound could not be cured at once; and Stephen was to have plenty of suffering before it was completely healed. To use another and very homely simile, Stephen's draughts of love were as though he had tasted the solution formed by a blue paper, appertaining to a seidlitz powder—nauseous and disagreeable; now followed the solution of the white paper—sharp and pungent, causing, too, a violent effervescence, which would eventually form a salutary draught. But Stephen was now about to pass through the ebullition stage—an ebullition so violent that he was tossed, as it were, upon the waves of doubt.

He had a short reprieve after leaving Frank, for the double encounter and his tea had served to direct his thoughts into another channel; but now it was all back again, and he felt terrible. At one time he was determined to hold fast to his faith, and hope to the last that Madeline might relent; prove fickle; or that Frank might tire of his conquest. Then came the recollection

of the meadow, with fainting Annie Newman—her pale face, and the fanning process; then burst forth such a sigh—almost a groan—[bubble of carbonic acid gas from the draught],—and Stephen's sighs were upon rather a large scale, and really of a very natural cast; in fact, so natural and unfettered were his fancies, that when his thoughts had full sway he did not take into consideration who might be near him. The consequence was, that when he delivered himself of that tremendous sigh, as he lay smoking upon the sofa, he did not take any notice of Alice, who was busy over her work in the window; nor that, by a singular coincidence, it was over some of that very fancy-work which entailed the use of floss silk; while, what was more singular still, the little sister happened to want another floss silk skein wound; so, coming round to the back of the sofa—

"Hold this skein of silk for me, Stevey," quoth she, as smooth and soft and kittenish in her aspect as was possible.

But Stevey seemed to think that she might quoth as long as she liked, for he did not budge an inch.

"Now, don't be ill-natured, Steve," said the little thing; "I don't often ask you to help me."

"No," grumbled Steve; "but 'once bit, twice shy,' you know."

"No, I don't," said Alice, pettishly; and then, seeing that the bird had avoided the snare she had prepared, casting off all reserve, and trying to capture him by a *coup de main*—"Now, sir," she continued, in a most peremptory tone, "I want to know what that great stupid sigh was for. You are surely not such an old goose as to be taking on like that about Maddy, are you?"

"Hold your tongue!" cried Stephen.

"No, I shall not hold my tongue, sir, until I know," said Alice, swelling with importance, and looking quite threatening. "But I don't want you to tell me anything, for I can see all about it; you're spooney still, and you ought to know better after all this time."

"Did Tom Phipps teach you that pretty word?" said Stephen, with dignity.

"No, sir; he did not," said Alice; "for I learnt it of one Mr. Stephen Vaughan."

"Oh! indeed!" said Stephen, gruffly.

"Now it's of no use, Steve; I've told you before that you ought to be confidential and trust your sister; but you don't a bit. Only to think of it—being so stupid and mooney about Maddy, when there's an ever so much nicer girl come into the place—one whom you might have if you liked, I know."

"No, you don't," said Stephen. "And pray who is your ever so much nicer girl?"

"Ah! I've a good mind not to tell you," said Alice; "for I'm sure you don't deserve it."

"Well then, don't tell me," said Stephen. "I wish you'd go away, and not bother."

"And I'm not going away, I can tell you, sir. You don't deserve to be noticed by any lady."

"Quite right," said Stephen, calmly.

"Now don't be so provoking and cool," cried

Alice, "when I'd been talking to her about you, and Maddy said——"

"Well, what did Miss Glebeley say?" exclaimed Stephen, raising himself upon one arm.

Alice made a pretty little grimace at him by way of reply, and smiled with triumph.

"Now then, sir," she said, "will you tell me what you were sighing for?"

"No—yes; well, then, it was because I was bothered and upset. Now, what did she say?"

"And what were you bothered and upset about?" said Alice. "Will you tell me if I tell you what Maddy said?"

"Yes," said Stephen, but very reluctantly.

"Well, then, she said—— Now, you really will tell me, Steve?"

"Yes, *yes*, YES!" shouted Stephen.

"Well, then, she said you were—— But I ought first to tell you it was yesterday evening when we were all at the rectory, and we had been talking about Frank, and Mr. and Mrs. Elton, and papa, and—and Mr. Phipps; and

then I was talking about you; and Maddy said you were a fine, noble young fellow, whom she much esteemed."

"Well?" said Stephen.

"Well, sir!" said Alice.

"Well, what else did she say?'

"Why, nothing else; was not that sufficient? I'm sure it was more than you deserved. Now, tell me what bothered and upset you."

Stephen took several very long draws from his meerschaum, and then sent the smoke eddying in clouds round his sister's little golden head.

"Now, Steve, do answer," said his sister, coaxingly.

"Who was all 'we' up at the rectory?" said Stephen, slowly.

"Oh, you provoking old tease!" cried Alice. "Why, Annie Newman, and Maddy, and I. We stayed tea after calling to see Maddy. I went with Miss Newman; and I say, Stevey, she is such a darling girl. Heigho! I wish somebody I know wasn't so stupid."

"Humph!" said Stephen. "I suppose she is her own brother's sister, eh?"

"No, indeed, dear, she isn't; for she's as merry and happy a girl as I ever met. We're quite like sisters already."

"Scratching to-morrow," growled Stephen.

"For shame, Steve, to talk in that way. Now, you promised faithfully to tell me what bothered and vexed you; and there *is* something, I know, or you would not come and lie here smoking and sighing, as I heard you when you thought you were alone. So come, Stevey, dear, tell me; now do."

"Well," said Stephen, "I have—that is—you know—the young birds have been destroyed a good deal lately, and I went shooting the vermin this morning, and only knocked over a magpie. There, you needn't look like that. It's a fact, 'pon my word."

"Very well, sir; then you won't confide in me, and you break your word. I shan't ask you any more; but you don't suppose I'm going to

be cheated and put off with such a lame tale as that. But, never mind, I shall find you out. There's been something going on this afternoon; but I shall know." And then Miss Vaughan, the *petite*, made her skirts rustle as she flounced out of the room.

Alice was right, for she did find her big brother out, and that, too, before many days were passed. Stephen and Frank Henderson had been out for a long ride one morning, when, having entered the drawing-room, they were both somewhat taken aback by seeing Madeline Glebeley and Annie Newman with Alice.

Stephen felt the colour rise to his forehead as he saluted both ladies, for Alice was looking him through and through, and with a smile of triumph upon her countenance which quite aroused all Stephen's endeavours to carry on a quiet, easy conversation.

"Miss Newman has been making me quite proud of your achievement, Steve; I did not know you were such a knight-errant."

"Pooh! nonsense!" said Stephen; "only too glad to have been of any service. Had a capital ride. Like horses, Miss Newman?"

Frank looked up and smiled at Stephen's confusion, which, of course, made matters worse. "May I ask what was the adventure?" he said.

"No, no; nothing at all," said Stephen.

"Indeed," said Miss Newman, quietly, and with plenty of self-possession, "I have cause to be very grateful for Mr. Vaughan's aid; for we poor, weak women are not much accustomed to cope with animals of any kind."

"Oh, nonsense!" said Stephen, very red in the face, but more from the malicious smiles of his sister than anything else. "Glad to have been of service to you. Don't mention it. Not worth speaking of. How's your brother, Miss Newman?"

The young lady addressed slightly elevated her eyebrows as she replied that he was quite well; and then the conversation became pretty general, Stephen being somewhat relieved, and whenever

he could make pretty sure that Alice's eye was not upon him, comparing the countenances and remarks of the two visitors. And then, again, the effervescence before alluded to began to make itself felt by the sufferer, who became so irritable that he caused Alice to start, so vicious was the look he bestowed upon her when she tried some little pleasantry at his expense.

However, the visit passed off pretty agreeably, and terminated with the social meal which bears the name of the sedative herb; for Mrs. Vaughan came in from an Edgeton visit, and insisted upon all parties staying, the meals at the Hall being rather irregular according to the markets the old Squire attended—one day six o'clock would be dinner-time, while the next day it would be devoted to tea; the old gentleman's rule being old-fashioned early dinners when at home.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

ALL quietly settled,—all quietly arranged without any romance or excitement,—without any of the roughnesses of life or impediments to the smooth course of their true love,—Madeline Glebeley and Frank Henderson were engaged. Frank had spoken to the Rector in a quiet, manly way, and the old gentleman had sat with head half averted for a short time, and then, turning to his expectant visitor—

"Frank," he said, "I have one principal aim in life—the happiness of my child. The thought of parting with her, though, seems unbearable. Leave me now, and rest content with the recollection that the happy future of Madeline takes up a large part of my daily thought."

So Frank left him, perfectly content with the

success of the interview; and it seemed strange, but Madeline was sitting looking extremely conscious in the drawing-room when Frank joined her, and to a looker-on there did not seem to be much doubt as to what would tend to the fair girl's happiness. So intent, too, were they, that they did not see the Rector come to the door, and stand looking a minute, sigh, and then pass on; but, though looking serious, decidedly not unhappy. And so it seemed to be all quietly settled, and Frank and Madeline were looked upon as in that state of probation—the engaged.

Now, no doubt the Rector was to blame, and might have looked higher for his child; but then he was a quiet, simple man, and could not see that money and position were the sole necessaries for happiness. He occupied no high position himself, scholarly and clever though he was, and for long years now he had contented himself with his lot, and settled more and more to his little country rectory.

The fact was, the Rector had a fault—a grand

fault—a regular flaw in his composition, which prevented his being ranged upon the shelf with the aristocratic china of the district. It was allowed that he was of the right material, but the crack in his composition marred all; and, consequently, he was looked down upon. The fact of it was, he was poor—very poor for a gentleman. The living did not produce two hundred pounds per annum; and when his daughter's education, domestic expenditure, an occasional new garment, and last, but not least, his poor, had been remembered, the Reverend Charles Glebeley had not much surplus with which to give dinner parties; and therefore he contented himself with the friendship of the lawyer, the doctor, and Squire Vaughan, falling back upon the society of his daughter and his garden.

And perhaps after all Mr. Glebeley's was not an unhappy life: he had his parishioners to attend to—people who could not see the crack in the china, but esteemed him as he deserved, for his was a most lovable disposition; then, too,

he had his library—one of no mean value, and full of old friends, the result of much economy, and many years' patient collecting; while above all he had the peace of mind falling to the share of a man who possesses the consciousness of having done his duty. Ill-natured people, in allusion to his hobby, had once spoken of him as "the rectory gardener;" and in a place like Waveley, any scrap of scandal was like leaven, spreading through and through in a very short time; but when it reached the Rector's ears he only smiled and said——"

"Yes; I'm the rectory gardener and the village shepherd."

The Reverend Charles Glebeley had possessed but little patronage in his early life, and he had lived for long long years the life of a poor curate, waiting, hoping, and trusting, and sharing these longings with one whom he had loved since his college days, but whom prudence forbade that he should marry. Grace Aylmore loved the poor curate well in return, and

patiently she waited with him—waited until her maiden charms ripened into womanhood—waited, too, till time passed, and her beauty fled to return no more.

But preferment came at last, and the long-waited-for ceremony was performed. Two years of true happiness passed swiftly away in their peaceful home, and then Grace breathed a last farewell to her husband as she set off on her journey to the unknown land, leaving a tiny daughter to the care of her widowed husband.

Charles Glebeley had fought long and often with sorrow; he had ministered comfort to others and whispered words of resignation and hope; and now a greater sorrow than had ever fallen to his share was upon him. But he battled with his grief; he fought with it and beat it down; though at one time it had whispered to him of death and rest from earthly trouble, and maddened him so that he could have cursed God and died. But the battle was to the weak; the grief was crushed down; and after a month's

severe illness he rose again to bear his burden and undertake the new duty that had fallen to his lot, a duty that brought with it rest, peace, and consolation. He found rest and happiness in his new duty, for he had still something to live for—something to gaze upon in remembrance of her he had lost—who had left him so soon. He set earnestly again to his work; but the events of the past two months had aged him ten years in appearance, and made the threads of silver lie thickly in his hair.

As the child grew, the hours that he spent at home were always in her society, and she soon became a companion to the widower. There was plenty of kind feeling displayed by those who knew his troubles, and it was during these early days that the child became strongly attached to simple, motherly Mrs. Henderson, and passed many an hour at the Mill Cottage. People said that the child was old-fashioned, and had ways beyond her years; and they had some authority for their remarks, for little

Madeline was quaint and maidenly far more than her age warranted. She almost began life as a miniature woman, and it was at first even ludicrous to see the tiny girl presiding at her father's table, the little hands barely able to lift the tea-pot, yet every act performed with the gravity taught by constant habit. But time sped on, and at the period of our story Madeline was fast passing into womanhood. A graceful picture now met the widower's gaze when directed towards the head of his table; and looking down the long vista of the past, memory would bring up many a recollection of another who had for too short a time sat in the self-same place.

Madeline Glebeley possessed a countenance that, as people who puff say, ought to have been seen to be thoroughly appreciated. She was not, like the heroines of our crack novels, lustrous in her beauty, neither was she dazzling, nor entrancing, nor bewitching, nor possessed of the other attributes necessary for the perfection of loveliness,—a state of being by the way in which

one gets to have but little faith as the wrinkles come; for, to extend a little the description already given, Madeline was simply a clear-skinned maiden, a bonnie English girl, with a blush-rose cheek, a set of white teeth, and a nose of unclassical shape. To anglicise our neighbours' comprehensive term, hers was an "altogether" which, would make anyone who knew her set her down as a most agreeable girl. After being for an hour in her company, a stranger generally left asking himself the question whether she were pretty or not; and if it be reasonable or allowable to treat of female beauty in the same language as would be applied to colour, one might say that she was of an exquisite neutral tint, where nothing was striking, but all softened and harmonious.

But, handsome or plain, half an hour in the society of Madeline was sufficient to drive away all thought of her personal charms, for they were quite eclipsed by the mental beauties she possessed, rendering her a companion of so en-

grossing a nature, that one can easily fancy a young fellow like Frank, or his old schoolfellow, imagining her name to be written upon his heart. She had long been the hope and stay of her father, and proud was the Rector of the feeling which existed. In her childhood she had been his consolation in many a bitter hour of tribulation; and now in her early womanhood, simple and unaffected, in all the freshness of her young and guileless heart, her father felt that he had indeed been blessed, and asked pardon for many a murmur and despairing thought that had come upon him in the bitterness of his soul.

Father and daughter were now as ever inseparable, and though the former upbraided himself for his selfishness, yet his heart ached at the thought of sharing the treasure with another. He had been her playmate in childhood, and in maturer years almost her sole companion. They had walked together and gathered the wild flowers of the field and wood; listened to the song of bird and bee; dipped together in the formidable-

looking science of botany, and spent their evenings in preparing and drying specimens; while by assiduous care he had educated his child to a pitch rather beyond that attained to in the modern boarding school. 'Tis true that her ideas upon fancy-work were rather meagre; but then her fingers were, for all that, nimble with the needle, and were besides well up in many little matters usually left to the cook; for Madeline was somebody in the kitchen, and had studied her Murray rather deeply. In fact, to such an extent had matters proceeded, that the Rector was wont to find fault with pastry which had not been built by the taper fingers—I forgot to say she had long white taper fingers—of his daughter; and he declared that no one else could make anything fit to eat. From which it may be inferred, that clergyman though he might be, the Reverend Charles Glebeley was not devoid of prejudice, but, like mortals generally, possessed of his failings.

Of course it will immediately be seen that

Madeline was not a lady in the conventional sense of the word, or she would never have been guilty of such coarseness as letting herself be seen enveloped in a large check gingham apron, and with hands and arms—such plump little dimply arms—all covered with sticky dough and flour, patting, poking, and punching away at a great panful of undeveloped bread; busy as a bee; eyes sparkling, and nose bloomed with a patch of flour, placed there when a rude fly had invaded its sanctity. Or in the golden broiling days, hot and red-faced over a charcoal stove, stirring away at a brazen vessel bubbling full of saccharine and fruity treasures, ever and anon skimming the surface with a great wooden spoon, and depositing the contents in an attendant basin, which afterwards, filled with milk, was partaken of with gusto. Then, too, the dairy! Now I don't mean to say that she scoured the churn, or made the milk tins glisten like silver; but such duties were executed under her superintendence, while the rich yellow cream, sent in

first as milk by those Alderney dames of the bovine race, Brindy and Buttercup, was always removed from the wide pan by Madeline's own fingers; and when Betty had churned this yellow cream into golden butter, the same taper fingers made it up into most inviting little pats whereon the acorn stood out prominently, and then placed them in a parsley nest to adorn the breakfast-table.

And yet of an afternoon the maiden would read French, Italian, or German authors to her father, and in the evening soothe him with the solemn strains of Beethoven, or touch him to the heart with Mendelssohn's speaking melodies, or Haydn's joyous, soul-inspiring airs, till he would take down his flute, and advancing to the piano, try to take the top notes of the treble, and end by invariably spoiling the effect of the piece his child was playing. And Madeline had plenty of reading aloud, for the Rector would complain that his eyes were not what they used to be; and, comfortably ensconced in his easy chair after a

busy sick-visiting or gardening day, he would drop off fast asleep after listening to the first few paragraphs—howbeit all his solid reading was done before mid-day.

The Rector used to say that he knew of nothing more agreeable to a bodily and mentally tired man, than listening to a sweet voice rendering the thoughts of a good author, while the best time was after a late dinner, and the seat an easy chair—when the evening fire just began to be comfortable, and it was too soon to ring for the tea urn, or what is less genteel, but decidedly better, the well-polished, saucy-looking little copper kettle that sits so jauntily upon the hob, steaming and singing away, as it beats time with its own lid, while the fire glistens and dances in its shining rotundity, and all appears so thoroughly English and comfortable. It was then, he said, pleasant to listen to a sweet voice, guided by thought and mind whose capacity grasped the author's meaning, and thoroughly took up his subject—it was plea-

sant then, with eyes half-closed, and the cares of life put for a while upon the mental shelf. The words and sentences came welling forth, and the subject soon started the mind off upon a train of reasoning, and then back it came with a jump; but only to depart again, and return with rather less energy; and this kept on being repeated until the already wearied mind in its reasoning upon the subject somehow became entangled, and was only extricated from its pleasant embarrassment by the next words that were heard—words which dissolved the spell in an instant:—

"Tea is ready!"

"Ah!" said the Rector, "it's very pleasant to be read to of an evening."

"I dare say it is," said his old friend the Squire, "but I'd rather have a pipe." But the Rector did not smoke.

Madeline often spent the whole afternoon reading to the Rector; but of an evening she always knew when to leave off, and it scarcely ever took more than two pages and a half to per-

fect the listener's somno-thoughtful state, when the book would be laid down, and the lamp shaded until the little pendule pointed to five minutes to nine; when the pot was filled, and after due law had been given to it for drawing, the thoughtful one was aroused by the magic words:—"Tea is ready."

There was a pleasant little fiction over this matter, for the Rector would never allow himself to believe that he had been asleep, neither was he willing that any one else should think so, consequently, there was a tacit understanding between father and daughter, and no one was the worse for the little bit of self-deceit.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### A SPICY HORSE.

LIKE the little boys who run about in August with an oyster-shell, the Edgeton people said it was "only once a year," and thoroughly gave themselves up to the delights of the time. There were joys for all at Edgeton races, for gingerbread came out in all its metallic-coated lustre, and broke out all along the High Street pavement in long booths, full to the summit of kings and queens, and those extraordinary birds that did not, after all, taste so very palatable when purchased. All the fun of a fair was there: the principal funny things being considered to be crackers, scratchers, and cayenne flavoured biters. Grantham biscuits in plenty, and nuts to such an extent, that road and pavement soon underwent a complete macadamisation of shells

upon which the foot crunched in a way decidedly not agreeable. Photography; rifle-galleries in the sheet-iron-tube sense of the word; swings, round-abouts, shows, knock-'em-downs, and preparations at every public-house for knock-'em-ups, from the quantity of bad liquor in store for those who would drink. Altogether, Edgeton was in a state of high fever, for upon these annual fête days from a country-bumpkin sort of a place it became the resort of all the world and his wife; and, in addition, the above worthies brought with them the whole of their family. Strange children they had, too—men with short cropped hair and greasy periwinkle curls in front of each ear; men with hair that it would have been an act of charity to shear; men with low repulsive countenances, surmounted by shabby scampish caps—caps which bore the appearance of being the offspring of a dissolute London muffin and an abandoned Scotch bonnet. These head-dresses were worn night-cap fashion, and drawn down tightly over the ears

—adding but little to the personal appearance in a reputable point of view, on account of their too suggestiveness of the pillory and cropped organs. This class of gentlemen affected tight cord trousers, clumsy drab over-coats, and thick white or spotted neckcloths. Their voices were harsh and rough, and they smoked a great deal, expectorated a greater deal, and swore the greatest deal. The Ethiopian brothers shone there too in sable lustre; while, evidently belonging to the same party, came a youth got up to resemble an Irishman, the typical "Paddy from Cork," armed with a formidable bit of a stick. Divers men with greasy packs of cards loitered about, and sometimes in a corner did a little quiet bit of cut and shuffle, as though by way of practice. Then there was the man with the two pillars and the ball that ought either to knock both down, or pass between without touching, but would do neither; the man in the greasy hat, with the wet clay, stick, and button; the man with the iron pins and rings; and all

the rest of the world's children who look upon the public at large as a fat sheep with a good fleece—men who live upon such events as the one now, in accordance with the annual custom, about to come off at Edgeton, for it was the day of the races.

Ragged men with ragged voices ran about proclaiming the event by shouting in husky tones, "horthentic carts with hall the names and colours," or seeking purchasers for their spiky lead pencils; the county paper proclaimed the event in an advertisement, headed by a cut of three impossible spidery horses, urged by jockeys of similar mould, making impossible strides past the winning-post; the inhabitants from miles round proclaimed it, too, by hurrying and driving in from every part of the district, in every description of cart, car, tumbril, chaise, and carriage, laden with hampers and baskets for the due furnishing of internal feasts, while the eyes were satiated with the sights around, and the emulation of the running horses. For people thought as much of the little officers' races at

Edgeton, as the Londoners and country at large do of Epsom, Ascot, Doncaster, or Newmarket. What was it to Edgeton that the horses did not gallop so swiftly, or that so many did not start? Edgeton thought that nothing out of the place could compare with their races, for there was the Town Plate, the Ladies' Plate, the County Stakes, the Subscription Purse, and the Officers' Plate, all to be well run for, and worthy of every amount of patronage. And besides there was the race-ball to conclude the day's proceedings, under the patronage of the worshipful the mayor (Mr. Jones, late grocer and dealer in glass and china)—Potsherd Jones, as he was popularly called—and the officers of the garrison; and a splendid turn out it generally was—at least the Edgeton people said so, and, what with the expectation of races and ball, went into a perfect fever of excitement.

Of course the epidemic used to spread as far as Waveley, and a party had arranged to start in good time from the Hall Farm.

Mrs. Vaughan undertook the task, and won over the Rector, who consented to Madeline forming one of the party; but Mrs. Vaughan was not satisfied—given an inch she wanted an ell, and at last persuaded the Rector to try and obtain Miss Newman from beneath her brother's protection for a few hours. But at the first hint the Reverend Augustus looked so horrified, that the Rector was dismayed, and changed the subject to blankets and coals in a moment. If an epileptic fit had been threatening, the poor curate could not have looked worse; and consequently, to her great disappointment, Annie Newman was not going; but she declared she would come over to the Hall to dinner if they asked her, which, as a matter of course, they did.

Tom Phipps came down over-night, in a new drab hat and zephyr overcoat, which, in combination with the floating beauties of a blue veil, he considered would be something startling to the nerves of the Fidgetonites. All the previous day too, Mrs. Vaughan had been busy making prepa-

rations, which evidently meant something to eat; and whatever the preparations might be, they were snugly packed up in a vast hamper, which in its turn was secured behind the dog-cart destined to convey three of the gentlemen of the party; while, in the roomy old four-wheeler were to be deposited, the Squire, Mrs. Vaughan, Alice, and Madeline.

The vehicles were at the door on the bright autumn morning—for October had set in, and the day was as clear as nature loves to make those farewells of the bright sunny times, ere the wintry blasts and chilly rains make bare wood and grove. The trees were gorgeous in their late tints, and mingled with the dark-hued firs were oaks whose crowns shone with a golden lustre, as though the summer sunshine, that had been wont to bathe them with its glory, was yet lingering in the foliage of the forest monarchs.

By special arrangement Tom Phipps was to "handle the ribbons," and drive his two country friends as soon as they were out of the village;

and upon the exodus of the party from the house, the whole of the packing and arranging of muslin and silk skirt being finished, and all in their places, Frank, who was now driving, reined back, so as to give the Squire and the ladies precedence.

"No, thanky," said the old gentleman; "we'll follow your lead; we sober folks will come on quietly. And, I say, Steve, as you are behind, no trespassing upon the hamper. Just keep your eye upon him, Frank; he always was vicious about food."

A laugh followed the old gentleman's sally; but Stephen did not even smile, for he looked glum and disappointed; and altogether, in spite of fits of gaiety, he was not quite the light-hearted young fellow of a few months before.

But this was not the morning for harbouring dull feelings. Frank touched the horse with the whip; there was a wave of the hand to the sober party; and in a few minutes a turn of the lane separated the excursionists.

"I say, Tom," said Stephen, lighting a cigar, do you know why we are sent on first?"

"No," said that worthy, taking the reins, and spitting out a corner of the gauze veil which had blown into his mouth. "Why was it?"

"Because the governor said he would not be seen in company with such a 'mawkin' as you made of yourself with that veil."

"Gammon!" said Tom; "why it's just the very thing."

"Perhaps so," said Frank; "but it's mighty little we barbarians in the country think of such embellishments."

"But I say, seriously, you know," said Tom, "did he say so, really?"

"Fact," said Stephen, examining the fastenings of the hamper.

Tom Phipps handed the reins back to Frank, and mounting a cigar, procured a light from the back seat. "Ah!" he exclaimed, mournfully, "must it be so? Descend, O aërial spirit of the race, and I'll consign thee to the nether

shades. And now, my charms behold unveiled." Saying which he detached the obnoxious gauze from his hat, and consigned it to the nether shades—that is to say, put it in his pocket.

"There," cried Tom, when he had finished, "give us hold of the reins again, and let's get on. Off we go, Sprightly!"

And off they did go; especially Stephen—who nearly went off into the road; for he occupied rather an uncomfortable position behind, displaying a strong inclination to shoot off at every turn; for the back seat of a dog-cart is certainly not a comfortable place, especially when that seat happens to be inclined, through the horse in the shafts being considerably too large for the vehicle; and, worse still, when the occupier's legs are sticking out at right angles, in consequence of a large hamper occupying their place upon the footboard. However, Stephen managed to hold on tightly, and sucked away at his cigar with the greatest of *nonchalance*, while the horse went along at a pace decidedly faster than a canter.

"Hold fast, behind there!" shouted Tom, bursting out with what was meant for an imitation of a post-horn; and then pulling up at the toll-gate, where, the legal demand having been satisfied, he inserted the ticket, carter fashion, in the band of his hat, and then started off again at anything but a pleasant pace.

Now, this was all very well for a time; and young men of two or three and twenty are not generally squeamish about a little danger—generally regarding it, more or less, as the salt of life; but as they drew nearer to the scene of the coming spectacle, obstructions in the road became frequent, and the consequence was that Master Tom nearly drove right over a basket chaise, and also managed to rasp the wheel of a neighbour in passing, who growing very irate, shook his whip at Stephen in a threatening way. But that gentleman merely replied with a mild puff of smoke.

At last, though, matters began to grow serious; and, in obedience to a telegraphic nudge from

Stephen, Frank tried to relieve the reckless charioteer—the modern Jehu—of the reins of office, saying—

"By your leave, Mr. Phipps, for I have no desire to give up that very minute chance I have of becoming senior wrangler this next year."

"Get out!" said Tom, indignantly, as he stoutly resisted all such interference; and he became the more determined upon finding that Stephen did not care to press the matter as to who should hold dominion over the horse.

"Never mind, Frank; let him drive," said Stephen.

"Thank you," said Frank; "but I have no wish to have my vertebral column dislocated; and over we must go if he keeps on driving. I tell you what, Tom, if you don't give up the reins I'll pitch you off the box."

But Tom drove on; only replying to the threat by sending a long puff of smoke in his companion's face, at the same time making the horse swerve, and driving over a hillock of road-

scrapings—nearly casting the party out of the vehicle.

This proved too much for the equanimity of Stephen, who now joined with Frank in trying to secure the reins; but in vain, for Tom held to them all the tighter, and whipped the horse up into a gallop.

"Now, Frank, lay hold," cried Stephen, as, seizing Tom Phipps by the shoulder and collar, with a sharp tug he drew him backward till his head rested upon the hamper, and his heels appeared in the air; but unfortunately, in one of the involuntary kicks he gave, caused by the pain of resting his back upon the iron-work which separated the seats, he gave such a jerk to the near rein that the horse turned sharply on one side, ran the wheel into the ditch, laid the dog-cart right over upon its side, and pitched the occupants into the newly ploughed field beyond the hedge; while, after a few desperate kicks and plunges, the horse breaking loose, turned round and set off at a quiet swing trot

back towards his stable, and to give comforting information to the inmates of the coming chaise respecting the mishap which had taken place.

Having thus disposed of the horse, it will, perhaps, be as well to return to the dog-cart, which, with the exception of wanting a new pair of shafts, lay comparatively uninjured; not so, however, was the drab hat of Mr. Tom Phipps; for as this gentleman sat upon the newly-turned furrows of the field, he was engaged in extricating his head from the crushed and bemired "Latest Fashion," which had, however, saved his seat of knowledge from a nasty bump.

As for Stephen Vaughan, he had gone more through the hedge than over it, and displayed two or three ugly rents in his garments; while Frank, the student, fell as he should have fallen—in a sedentary position. Fortunately, no one was much hurt; and the first question discussed was —were they in a fit state to go on to the races?

Tom, though gazing ruefully upon his hat, exclaimed, "Go! yes! I should think so. I

came down on purpose; and—there!" he exclaimed, elbowing his battered head-case into shape, pushing in projections, and rubbing out bruises; "that's better. Come along, my boys; this world's all vanity and—no, that isn't it—all bosh, and bother of body." And then he commenced cissing and fizzing like an ostler, as he rubbed the dirt off the habiliments of Frank; while Stephen, upon taking off his torn overcoat, looked scarcely the worse for the accident.

"I say," cried Tom, screwing up his face, "I hope no bottles are broken. How about the prog?"

"Why, you'll have to carry it," growled Stephen.

"To be sure," said Frank, rather ill-humouredly. "The little beast has been the cause of all the bother."

"Sir," said Tom, fiercely, "did you apply that zoological remark to me? May I inquire whether it was intended as an insult, or——"

"There, jump out of this. Get over the hedge,"

said Frank, who was picking and eating blackberries, "here are the ladies;" and directly after the Squire pulled up his sound and willing steed.

"Now, then," he began, "what's the matter, eh?"

"Oh, Stephen, how you have frightened us!" cried Mrs. Vaughan, while Frank went to the back seat to set Madeline and Alice at rest as to the accident.

"Well," said the Squire again, "what's the matter, eh?"

"Why, sir," said Stephen, hesitating, "you see, Pepper took fright and bolted."

"Pepper took fright and bolted!" sneered the Squire. "Do you think I am going to believe in that animal taking fright at anything but the prospect of going without his customary corn? Here, Tom Phipps, Frank, what's the matter? Who was driving when this happened?"

"Well, sir," said Tom, clearing his throat, and speaking very obsequiously, "you see,"—and here Tom stopped again.

"No, I don't," said the Squire, testily. "There, for goodness sake, tell me how it all happened, Frank."

"Well, sir," said the last appealed to, "Tom Phipps was driving——"

"There, that will do," said the Squire, interrupting; "I'm quite satisfied. I don't want to know any more, without it is how you two great fellows could be such fools as to let him."

Tom Phipps pulled off his hat, and made such a grimace of offended dignity as sent Mrs. Vaughan almost into convulsions.

"Are any of you hurt?" said the Squire.

"No," said Frank. "I think we have all escaped pretty well."

"My new hat," said Tom, suggestively, as he turned the injured "Down" round and round.

"Pity it wasn't your head," growled Stephen, who felt himself somewhat hot and aggrieved with the Pepper dose the Squire had given him.

Stephen's remark and Tom's appealing tone caused a general laugh at the stained wreck of

the "best felt," much to the discomfiture of the luckless wearer, who seemed rather uncomfortable in his mind.

"Well, what's to be done?" said the Squire; "Pepper has about reached home by this time."

"Oh! we'll fasten the hamper on behind, and then walk," said Frank, a suggestion that was at once acted upon, and then the chaise started again; the trio carrying the cushions of the dog-cart into the nearest cottage, and then following on foot.

They reached the town in about half an hour, when Tom's first proceeding was to visit the hatter's shop, from whence he soon after emerged in a puce flannel cap with a white border, leaving his damaged hat to be re-shaped.

"Neat thing, ain't it?" said Tom; "colour's good."

"Very," said Frank, drily. "I should put the veil on now, I think."

"No; come now," cried Stephen, alarmed; "none of that in the town."

"Wouldn't do," said Tom, innocently. "You see it wants the height of the hat to carry it off."

A sharp ten minutes' walk brought them alongside of the chaise, which the Squire had manœuvred into a capital position for viewing the proceedings of the day. And now, upon a minor scale, the ground presented all the attributes of Epsom Downs. That which had been visible in the town in the morning was here again upon the race-course, but very strongly recruited. Men were already yelling out their odds upon the various horses, or "Agen the field bar one," and offering the best of chances to people who would bet—offering, with almost unheard-of generosity, fortunes to those who would but accept the chances thrown in their way. If there were nuts in the town earlier in the morning they were here now, with men whose mission it seemed to be to furnish all people with the shelly delicacies, forcing them upon all comers, and evidently labouring under the impression that the

human jaws were designed expressly for the purpose of cracking shells filled with a brown dust, the bitterest of the bitter. Vehicles were ranged as closely as possible to the grand stand, and along by the line of posts, every spot of ground which would not hold a carriage, chaise, gig, or cart, being filled up with flesh—pushing, squeezing, and grumbling flesh—from amongst which arose the constant petillation of cracking nuts.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### STEPHEN VAUGHAN EMULATES AN OLD FRIEND.

THE Waveley party having been early upon the ground, the Squire had managed to insinuate the chaise into a place just past the winning-post, where they waited the commencement of the races, and watched the proceedings of the motley crowd.

"Twenty to one against 'Ighflyer!" shouted a man perched upon a barrel. "Thirty to two against Sally Brass." "Hany gent take the odds? Book it to you, sir—you in the cap?" cried the fellow, making a set at Tom Phipps, very much to that gentleman's disgust, for he was busy explaining the theory of racing to Alice Vaughan, and enlightening her uncultivated mind upon the mysteries of making a book.

"Pray don't bet, Mr. Phipps," whispered Alice.

"Oh, certainly not, if you forbid me," said Tom, gallantly.

"I say, Frank, only listen," said Stephen; "here's Tom Phipps—Meerschaum, or Mere sham—Tom turning into a ladies' man, and doing the polite. Here, come away; it's quite sickening. Let's have a stroll."

But Frank seemed to be so very much in the same boat with Tom, that he was not disposed to come away and obey the slightly dog-in-the-mangerish hest of friend Stephen. There appeared to be a very strong desire upon Frank's part to stay where he was, and to talk to the ladies who occupied the back seat of the old four-wheeler. And, besides, he was engaged; and engaged people, generally speaking, are the worst of company, and sometimes a positive nuisance. As long as you let them "talk shop," which in their instance means of the excellences of the adored, all is right, but on other subjects

they are "flat, stale, and unprofitable" to the world at large. There were so many things to explain to Miss Glebeley: why horses were dressed up in clothes; whether they were well fed, they looked so thin; and which way they would run. Then the hieroglyphics upon the cards were hard to understand, and the colours of the horses had to be referred to so many times that, at last, before all had been thoroughly explained, the bell rang for the first race, when the course had to be cleared. Excitement became visible on every countenance, and the ladies had to be supported as they stood up in the chaise. Then followed a pause, and when everyone was growing impatient, came a light cantering by of horsemen in rainbow-tinted silks, and a cry from the ladies that the race had commenced, closely followed by a blush for their mistake and undue excitement.

But at last came the start for the first race; and amidst a burst of cheering, away darted seven horses along the course, watched by thou-

sands of eager straining eyes, as they seemed to melt in the distance into one parti-coloured moving body, opening and closing, and spreading out in various combinations, but by degrees to grow more straggling as the distance became greater, till lower down the course they disappeared for a few seconds, but only to be again announced by the loud shout of the more distant spectators. Nearer and nearer—more excitement—more shouting—three horses close together—one falling behind; and then, with a rush through the air, and the rapid beating of the hoofs upon the turf, a black and yellow meteor, closely followed by a blue flash, darted by the winning-post, when by reference to their cards our party learned that Belladonna had won the race, while Blue Belle ran second.

"Bravo!" cried the bluff old Squire. "That's capital. Makes one feel quite thirsty;" while the cheeks of the younger ladies looked flushed with excitement, their brightened eyes being well

in keeping with the heightened tint of the other features.

All at once the Squire referred to his watch, and found that it was half-past one. Then he turned his eyes towards the hamper and then took another glance round at the crowd, but evidently rather fidgety, and with something upon his mind.

As for others of the party, it was not surprising that Madeline's cheek should wear a soft flush, for she had been standing with her hand tightly clasped by Frank to keep her from falling, which was highly necessary, for there was not the slightest probability of the chaise stirring, the horse having been removed, and being comfortably engaged at the time grinding his corn in a neighbouring stable.

Upon meeting the eyes of Alice laughing with mischievous glee, and perhaps a little sharper from a mingling of disappointment, Madeline blushed still deeper, to the very great delight of the little maiden. Like a gallant knight, though,

Frank came to the rescue, and using the same weapons as the assailant, whispered to her, but loud enough for Madeline to hear—

"Alice, did you know that Tom Phipps was a printer?"

"No," said that young lady very innocently. "I thought that he was—why he *is* in an office in the City."

"Oh yes," said Frank, "quite right; but he's a printer all the same. Look at his proofs." Saying which, Frank pointed to the marks of Tom's dirty fingers upon the maiden's straw-coloured gloves.

The blush that was fast fading from the cheeks of Madeline Glebeley reappeared in those of Alice, but of a deeper, richer tint, while the sheepish aspect of Tom Phipps was so ludicrous, that it was upon him that the laughter centred, laughter of so loud and merry a nature as to draw forth a "hush-hush, children" from the maternal Vaughan.

"Half-past one," said the Squire, not noticing

the laughter. "Hum! half-past one, and the first race only just over. What's the good of saying twelve o'clock punctually, and then being an hour and a half late? Well, I shan't wait any longer. Here Frank, and you Tom, lend a hand and help undo this basket. We'll soon see what's inside. Where's Steve?"

But no one knew, for Steve had not been seen since the race.

"Poor boy," said Mrs. Vaughan, helping to make the hamper disgorge its contents, "poor boy, I hope he will soon come back, or he will be so hungry and faint."

"Pretty little fellow," said the Squire, breaking off and eating a piece of bread, "that would be a pity. Ah! he ought to be here. I would not give much for his chance—that's a capital glass of ale," he said, interrupting his speech to taste the foaming liquid—"let's see, what was I saying? Oh, I know. I wouldn't give much for his chance of a meal after Tom Phipps has been at the *vee-arngs*. I believe that

is the correct pronunciation, is it not, Miss Vaughan?"

"Oh! papa dear," exclaimed Alice, "how can you be so rude?" And then, in a whisper to Mrs. Vaughan, "What will Mr. Phipps think?"

Mamma's reply was a smile at her child's earnestness, while the only effect that it had upon Tom was to produce that peculiar twitching of the eyelid, which, in a person of a lower grade of life would have been called a wink, but in a person of Mr. Phipps' position, merely a muscular contraction.

"Sam Weller the second, emptying the hamper," said Frank, as Tom set busily to work helping Mrs. Vaughan. "Now, old fellow, let's have the comments."

"None here," said Tom, sharply. "Cold chicken, custard, tartlet, tongue, pigeon pie, pork pie, porter, pepper, puffs, pastry, but no comments. Mrs. Vaughan, ma'am," said Tom, in a tragic tone, "where are the comments?"

"I think we can make a very good lunch with-

out either comments or commentators, Mr. Phipps," said Mater.

"Just so," said Tom. "I quite agree with you, ma'am, for common——"

"There; glass of sherry with you, Tom Phipps," said the Squire. "You'll get nothing to eat if you talk so. Now, ladies, no ceremony. See that Miss Glebeley has a good lunch, or dinner, or whatever it is, or she will complain when she gets home, and I shall have her father taking me to task and setting me to read tracts by way of penance."

"Next race reg'lar sell," said a voice behind the party. "Young Byng's mare Vesta scratched. Most ruin him, I know."

"Why, what's up?" said another.

"Oh! she's just thrown Dick Curber, who was to ride her, and they do say his neck's broke. Howsomever, he's took back home on a gate, and there ain't no one else as dare ride her. As for Byng hisself, he daren't even mount her. But she's a bad devil, an ugly, camel-necked beast.

She'll whip round that old head of hers and bite your legs as soon as look at yer. I have ridden the mare, and I knows if I was on her back who'd be first over the last hurdle, and that's me, my lads. But then once in a feller's life's enough to have a mare roll upon you."

"Well, but," said another voice, "can't he get anyone to ride her?"

"No-o-o!" said the other. "I don't believe there's a man in the country as would mount the brimstone. Hurdle race, too."

During this colloquy the Squire had been sitting almost petrified, and with his knife and fork in anything but an elegant position. At last, though, he gave a start, poured himself out a glass of ale, drank it, and burst out:—

"Poor fellow—poor fellow—quite spoils one's liking for the race. Poor fellow! been betting heavily, too. How could he be such a donkey? And t'other poor chap's neck broke. Why I've a good mind to ride that mare myself," he continued, seriously; and then, seeing the efforts made

by all present to keep from laughing, he looked down at his eighteen stone figure, recollected himself, and then laughed the loudest of all.

"If it's a fair question, sir," said Frank, "what do you weigh?"

"There, don't ask me," said the old gentleman. "I'm ashamed to tell you. But I declare if I were a young fellow like you, or Tom Phipps, I'd ride."

"But I've never been on a horse more than half a dozen times in my life, and I suppose they wouldn't consider it the thing if I got down and climbed over the hurdles. And about neck-breaking, you know. I've only got one;" and then Tom settled his own in his collar, as if to make sure it was all right.

"And I'm no horseman," said Frank. "You know I seldom hunt." But at the first words a tender hand was upon his arm, and Madeline gave such a look of horror and alarm that he gave her a reassuring smile which quite set her at rest as to his intentions.

"Ah!" said the Squire, "when I was a young man——" but what took place when he was a young man no one learned, for he was prevented from enlarging upon the degeneracy of the present age by Mrs. Vaughan, who exclaimed—"Poor Stephen; he will be quite famished," being the only person who seemed at all disposed to trouble about the odd one of the party.

"Never mind him," exclaimed the Squire; "he has turned in with somebody, where there'll be a scrap to eat I dare say."

"There; hark!" cried Alice, excitedly. "There goes the bell again."

"So there is," said the Squire. "So help pack." And in a few minutes the hamper contained the fragments of the feast, while the party had again taken their places to see the next race, which was to have been a more exciting affair, for at short intervals lofty hurdles had been placed across the course, and the men were even now securing the last row. But a damp had been cast upon the proceedings by the

rumour that Vesta would not run, for in spite of her brimstone character, she was the favourite of the race. However, the hopes of the secondary horses ran high, and now Handgallop stood in the first place, for between the last named and Vesta, the wise in such matters had decided would be the sharp struggle in the last run—this being considered the great event of the day.

The course was cleared, and the six horses about to start were taking the preliminary canter, and giving time for a few concluding bets to be made, while dissent was strong as to the running or not of the favourite, Vesta. But all doubt was soon at an end, for a tremendous cheer arose from the direction of the saddling paddock, and directly after a beautiful wild-looking grey mare came sidling slowly up the course, with starting eye, arched neck, and her great pink nostrils widely distended. Every now and then she stood quite still, tossing and shaking her head, half in fear, half in anger, as the cheers became louder and

more incessant — the spectators forgetting that every shout and wave of hat or handkerchief was likely to put a stop to the proceeding they so devoutly wished for. But the cheering was again taken up, and "Vesta, Vesta," ran from lip to lip to the very great disgust of those who had horses in the race; at the same time, knowing the character of the wilful beauty, every eye was directed at the jockey in white who dared to take the place of the injured man.

The colours were quite correct, "white with black cap and gold tassel," and the shouting grew louder than ever as the rider took off the said black cap and saluted the crowd, thereby disclosing more plainly the fair Saxon countenance of Stephen Vaughan. But restive mares are not fond of having caps waved upon their backs, and Vesta formed no exception to the rule, for she set up her back, and began to what is technically termed "buck," a most unpleasant caper for a man who does not set himself up for a finished horseman, and decidedly not agreeable if he is.

"Hooray!" shouted Tom Phipps, wild with excitement, leaping from the chaise-wheel to the ground, to the very great disgust of a stout butcher with corns.

"Hooray!" shouted the Squire, waving his hat, and feeling prouder than he had ever before felt in his life; while the name of the rider sped from mouth to mouth, so that the ladies of the party heard from other sources that which they had previously been unable to comprehend.

The crowd cheered, and Frank Henderson with them, for he could not help feeling proud of his school-fellow, though the moment after his pleasure became damped, for it seemed to him that it was done out of bravado, and for the sake of lowering him in the eyes of Madeline.

"Oh! my dear," exclaimed Mrs. Vaughan, turning pale, "do pray stop him. Foolish, headstrong boy; he will be killed. Get down, pray, John, and stop him."

"Not a bit of it," said the Squire, stoutly; "not to save him from breaking his neck. But

he won't do that. *I* taught him to ride, and he can sit any horse in the kingdom. Look there," he exclaimed, as Vesta made a buck leap, but without altering her rider's position in the least. "But he can't win; he's too heavy, ever so much. See how he sits her though, just like a cork. But he's acted like a trump, so let him alone."

But Mrs. Vaughan did not feel as if she could let her first-born alone, for turning with a pitiable face to Madeline, she whispered—

"Oh, pray, beckon to him to come, Miss Glebeley. He would come for *you*, directly, so pray do: for my sake."

It was only a low whisper, but perfectly audible to Alice and Frank, whose eyes met, when those of Alice twinkled half-spitefully, for Frank looked as if he had been stabbed to the heart. As for Madeline, as she stammered a reply to Mrs. Vaughan, her face turned scarlet, for as she glanced at Frank, she saw his pained look, and then how it changed to one of bitter-

ness as his brow knit, and he looked straight before him at the course.

But there was no time for stopping the rider of Vesta; and after her *mal-à-propos* speech, Mrs. Vaughan saw that she was too late, and tightly clasping her hands, stood gazing at the incidents now following each other in rapid succession.

Madeline turned to Frank, but he would not see her look, while the poor girl herself was blinded with the tears that would rise to her eyes; and, in spite of feeling how ungenerous were the thoughts, Alice could not keep down the triumph which swelled her breast, and made her snub Tom Phipps terribly when he spoke, greatly to that gentleman's discomfort.

"Confound them!" growled the Squire, all at once; "I wish they'd be quiet, and stop that stupid shouting"—the old gentleman had ceased his own—"look at that, now!"

But there was no need for the Squire's expression: every one was gazing with the greatest excitement at the beautiful group before them:

the mare, frightened and fretful with the noise surging around her, and angry at being mounted by a strange rider, had been fidgeting about, champing her bit, and sending flakes of foam all over her vein-woven sides. One of her first acts had been to throw out head and legs, and indulge in a shake, almost violent enough to dislodge saddle and rider; and, just as the exclamation left the Squire's lips, the mare reared up as though she would fall backwards, but coming down once more upon all-fours, she gave another buck leap from the ground, as though formed of steel springs.

However, Stephen Vaughan did some credit to his father's training, and retained his seat with all the grace and ease of a finished horseman; and at last, making out his own party, waved his hand as he cantered by, in answer to the fluttering handkerchiefs and Tom Phipps' puce cap.

But Madeline did not wave her handkerchief; and for her and Frank the day seemed to have turned quite cloudy; and no wonder—for Frank

felt like a man possessed of a great treasure, and, hardly believing in his good fortune, jealously watched it, and the more keenly from knowing that there was one who would rob him, were it possible.

"Looks easy enough to ride," said Tom, replacing his cap, with all due attention to his curls.

"Oh yes; easy enough," said the Squire, drily. "We must give you a mount before you go."

"Thankye," said Tom; but he did not appear to be excessively delighted with the prospect of the promised treat.

And now the horses were ranging as near in line as was possible with the restless animals. As for Handgallop, a moment's glance sufficed to show that the strong bay horse must prove a formidable adversary, and, heavily as Vesta was weighted, would most probably be the winner. Every stride showed forth the iron sinews he possessed, as in a pace, the *fac simile* of his

name, he darted off before the signal was given, and was only pulled up just before reaching the first hurdle.

This caused a little more delay, much having been already caused by the alteration of weights, &c.; but the rider, a little weazen-faced looking fellow, soon got back into position, and gave Stephen Vaughan and his steed anything but an agreeable look.

The excitement now grew intense; for there had been four false starts, all of which tended to make Vesta more troublesome and fretful than ever; and it was very evident, even to the non-professional observers, that much of the disorder had been intentionally caused by the scarlet-shirted rider of Handgallop; while the jockey might have been seen, by a close observer, gnawing his under lip in a way that did not betoken much inward comfort.

But the starter was again trying to solve the difficult problem of getting the horses into a line; and at last, in despair, when the restive brutes

spiration from his forehead. "Oh! d——n it! what's to be done?"

But there was no time for an answer. Before trainer, or groom, or owner, could approach the wilful beauty, Stephen, with the blood trickling down his chin from his bitten lip, had, in the anger of the moment, raised his whip to strike; but in an instant he changed his tactics, and began to caress the proud arching neck of the mare, who answered by obeying the light touch of the rein, and turning sharp round, bounded off with a stride that would soon have distanced all competitors. At this time, though, all that Stephen Vaughan thought of was, that it had taken him out of hearing of those who had been jeering at his discomfiture.

This incident had taken up but a very few seconds of time; but they had been moments of inestimable value, and such as had been borne in agony by the owner of the capricious Vesta; for he had well known, and trusted the powers of his steed with so much confidence, that upon her

success depended the future of a foolish, but open-hearted man. Bitterly did he feel the ignominious position in which the friend who had come forward to help him was placed; and as he saw Stephen Vaughan raise his hand to strike, he felt that all was over, for he knew how the mare would resent a blow; and then he turned to leave the course, drawing his hat down over his eyes as he did so.

But trifles change the current of the human thoughts: in an instant his despair was changed into anger, and he felt an intense desire to wring the necks of a couple of under-sized horsey young gentlemen, in very tight wrinkly trousers, big boots, long-sleeve waistcoats, and slouchy caps, who sniggered to one another about the new rider's mishap.

"Ho—ho—ho!" laughed one. "S'elp me! only looky there—there's a rider!"

But the anger of Vesta's owner was in another instant turned into hope once more by the shout of the crowd, as the mare bounded off, and he

thought that there was still a chance for the second place, which would save him from irretrievable ruin.

Stephen Vaughan knew all this well enough; and bitterly, too, did he feel the jeering and laughter of the lookers-on; but, once in motion, he began to look at the aspects of the race: the six horses before him were all well over the first hurdle before he even made a start; but now that it was made, and he was off, with hands well down, and a grip of the saddle that showed he meant business, the mare went over the short turf with that light springy stride only shown by a true English thorough-bred.

Stephen's heart rose with every bound, but he smiled bitterly as he heard the cheering of the fickle crowd. He could not, however, hear the cries that arose as he neared the first hurdle.

"He's too much for her; she'll rush it—she'll rush it!"

But, no; with the grace and ease of a bird, the noble mare seemed to skim over the ground,

lightly rising to clear the obstacle, and then away again, stretching out more and more, and with every stride lessening the distance between herself and those which had gone before.

On went the mare, like the wind, needing no urging, but trying her best to overtake her competitors; but the start they had obtained was tremendous, and the acmé of Stephen's hopes now was to gain a second place; though he could feel that had he but had a fair start, it would have gone hard with him, in spite of his weight, if he had not come in the winner.

The second hurdle was well cleared by all six horses, and it was now very evident that scarlet, feeling sure of the race, was keeping Handgallop back, and playing with his rivals. But like a fate, steadily on came Vesta, with her long springy stride; and she, too, cleared the second hurdle as gracefully as the first.

The third hurdle—and Vesta still far enough behind; but here, down went a horse and man, and Stephen trembled lest his wilful steed should

check at the unwonted sight, and refuse the leap; but, no; with a slight pressure of the knees, on went the mare, seeming almost to stride over the bent-down hurdle, close by where the last horse had fallen. And now, thoroughly warming to her work, away she went; and, flushed with excitement, the veins began to swell in her rider's forehead, while he felt the arteries in his temples beat as the wind rushed by him.

The fourth hurdle—and over like a flash, while but a few more strides, and the mare was alongside of the last horse of the five; then a head—half a length—a length ahead—and then away, and over the next hurdle—abreast of the next horse, scarlet leading the way by a good two lengths, with black-and-green next; while now turning in his saddle, Handgallop's jockey seemed to consider that it was time to increase the distance, and began to settle to his work, though, to the most inexperienced eye, there could not be a doubt as to the issue of the race.

Stephen Vaughan knew what he had to do;

and that was—his best; and come in as close to the winner as he possibly could. The temptation to whip or spur was terrible; but he felt that he must not use either, though on both sides and in front of him they were in full requisition; but the virgin skin of Vesta remained untouched, and she answered to the pressure of the rider's knee with elastic bounds, that brought her before long into the third place; and now, to Stephen's intense delight, he felt that before long he would be abreast of black-and-green.

Onward still, but with scarlet many lengths ahead, and evidently now doing his best, while to the satisfaction of Vesta's rider he could feel that the second place must be his. A glance over his shoulder showed him that he had nothing to fear behind, and on he went, handling his mare with all the skill he could command.

Only two more hurdles; and as they neared the first, Vesta crept up closer and closer still to the Irish Maid and her black-and-green rider. Over again, with a skim like a bird, scarlet far

on in front, and Stephen running neck and neck with the black-and-green; but as they neared the last hurdle, Handgallop has checked, refused it, and nearly threw his rider, giving time for the two next horses to come up, when the black-and-green rushed right in front of Stephen's mare, rose to the leap, and fell heavily; but, with a tremendous rush through the air, Vesta cleared horse, man, and the broken down hurdle, at the same moment as scarlet forced Handgallop to take his leap; and then edging off from his rival for fear of some trick of jockeydom, knowing as he did the character of his steed, Stephen set his teeth and pressed on, knowing now how good was his chance for the prize.

There was no thought of being second now, but the rider of the mare trembled with excitement as he saw the jockey hotly bringing whip and spur into play. And now, as they swept along the last part of the course, came the ringing cheers of the crowd, loudly heard above the rapid beat of the horses' hoofs.

Onward still, every second seeming a long minute. The last two hundred yards, and scarlet raining the blows upon his horse, which gained half a neck twice over, but only to lose it again the next instant. Loud shouts and cheers as the horses passed, as if driven in pair harness; and, as they darted along, Stephen heard the shout of, "Whip, Grey! whip, Grey!" but he dared not, though he lost the race, for he felt certain the mare would resent it. So with whip in teeth, and both hands at the reins, he pressed her sides, and away she dashed.

Rushing wind—half blinded eyes—a sea of waving handkerchiefs—thundering cheers from the excited spectators—"Good race! good race! Grey wins—Bay wins—Grey wins! Vesta—Vesta—Vesta—Grey wins!" yelled the crowd.

And Grey had won, without touch of whip or prick of spur, for she shot past the winning-post a good neck ahead of Handgallop, and went careering on far, far enough, before she could be stayed.

"There!" exclaimed the Squire. "Think of that now! a race is never won till it's lost. I'd have bet a thousand to one against him."

The great race of the day was over, and the people rushed into the course as the horses were led back with dripping and heaving flanks. Then into the scales went the winner to be declared all right, with plenty to spare, and afterwards to be nearly hand-shaken to death, and half drowned with proffered glasses of champagne.

The great race of the day was over, too, for the Waveley people. Those which followed might be good or bad—thousands might be lost or won; but the Waveley party were quite satisfied. So, after shaking hands all round, and handing out sherry and bottled ale to the last glass, filling up the intervals by dabbing himself dry, the Squire settled himself into his seat, and proceeded to fan himself cool.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, with a sigh of relief, "I wish I had a pipe; I can't get on with cigars.

Lend me that dirty little black thing of yours, Tom Phipps."

Tom produced the said "dirty little black thing," which was petted up most tremendously, and enclosed in a handsome morocco case, lined with pink satin, the occupant being, moreover, mounted with silver.

"Nice colour, ain't it?" said Tom, flourishing the black-hued meerschaum, and giving it an affectionate rub upon the sleeve of his coat.

"Bee-u-ti-ful!" said Frank, drily.

"I've had that pipe two years," said Tom, as he passed it to the Squire, who received it with a serio-comic aspect of disgust, "and I don't know when I've seen one colour better."

"Pray," said Alice, "are pipes the very reverse of everything else, that they are to be loved for their nastiness?"

"Hush!" said Frank; "don't talk so, or you'll put Tom's pipe out, truly, as well as metaphori-

cally. How many pipes have you at home, Tom?"

"Fifty-two," said the little fellow, rather complacently.

"Fifty-two pipes!" said Frank. "Fifty-two weak points."

"Weak, eh? what do you mean by that?" said Tom. "Oh, I say, though, here he is! See-e the conqu'ring he-e-e-e-e-ro comes; tiddle iddle iddle umpty; tiddle iddle um the drums," sang Tom, most unmusically.

And in effect Stephen Vaughan made his appearance to be praised, blamed, cheered, and scolded, at one and the same time, while somehow or another Frank could not help feeling a peculiar sinking sensation of the heart as he watched and listened to all that was said, for Madeline's countenance was deeply suffused, and it was evident that it would have been a great deal more comfortable for all parties if the Reverend Augustus Newman had not set his face against racing, but allowed his sister to be of the party.

About an hour after, the Squire had the horse put to; and leaving the gentlemen to obtain a conveyance for themselves, and to come away when seemed them good, he drove off the course.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### ASSAULT AND BATTERY.

"HALF-PAST SIX," said the Squire. "They might have been here an hour ago. I'm not going to eat my mutton with the gravy all full of sixpences and the fat sticking to the roof of my mouth like venison. Ring the bell, Alice, nd we'll have it up directly."

"Give them another ten minutes," said Mrs. Vaughan, "for I don't think poor Stephen had any lunch, after all."

"Not ten seconds," said the Squire stoutly. "Here's Miss Maddy, and Miss Newman as well, looking quite famished."

"Pray don't hurry the dinner upon my account," said Madeline; "I can very well wait." A remark which was backed by Annie Newman,

who could not keep a warm glow out of her cheek, nor her eyes off the door; while every time it was opened she started and trembled;—all of which looked as if the poor girl were unwell.

"Hum!" said the bluff old gentleman. "In my young days I don't think I should have kept you waiting for me long; but then, young men were different in those times to what they are now. Weren't they, my dear?"

"Now you know very well I detest flattering," said Mrs. Vaughan; "and yet, with all your grey hairs, you are as fond of it as ever. I am no courtier, so you try in vain."

Dinner was soon after announced; and the party repaired to the dining-room, where when all were seated the three empty chairs placed for the truants seemed sadly in want of tenants. Directly each dish had been partaken of, it was sent down by Mrs. Vaughan—but under protest from the Squire—to be kept hot until the gentlemen came in; while the cook declared that it

was a shame, and she wouldn't stand it. And at last the dinner was finished, but without a sign of the gentlemen.

"I hope nothing has happened," said Mrs. Vaughan, turning Madeline quite pale at the thought of another accident. "Surely they have not been so foolish as to let Mr. Phipps drive again."

Alice bit her lip, and gave her head a slight toss, as though she could not see anything so very foolish in allowing that gentleman to drive.

"Pooh, nonsense," said the Squire. "No fear of that. Boys like them never get hurt much. They'll come in presently. Why, if I had upset the dog-cart to-day like they did, old Childe would have brought me in a twenty pound doctor's bill, safe."

Back in the drawing-room, with the urn hissing upon the table, and the ladies playing at "cat's cradle" or "scratch cradle," or whatever the proper title may be, with some wondrous cotton

tangle which they were weaving into a pattern looking like round holes encircled with cotton spikes. Mrs. Vaughan was making the tea; while the Squire, leaning back in his easy chair, was thinking, and aiding his cogitations by stroking the cat upon his knee from the tip of its nose to the very end of its long lithe tail, till the fur crackled as it sent forth tiny sparks of electricity, while the animal itself purred forth its satisfaction.

The tea was poured out, and its fragrant odour spread around;—but still no gentlemen.

"How dreadfully rude," whispered Alice to her friends; "I'm quite ashamed of them."

"I hope nothing is wrong," replied Madeline; while Annie only looked anxious, and took another glance towards the door.

"I have it!" cried Alice aloud. "And it's *too* bad of them."

"What is, my dear?" said Mrs. Vaughan.

"Why, the *tiresome selfish* things have stopped to go to the race-ball," cried Alice, with her face

flushed with vexation. And then she nodded her head a great many times, as much as to say, —"but I'll be even with them."

"No, they haven't," said the Squire, after listening to the various surmises that succeeded the ball theory;—"they haven't gone to the ball. But I tell you what it is—there isn't a doubt about it. They're stuck!" And the old gentleman said this in the most decided manner.

"They're what?" exclaimed Mrs. Vaughan.

"Stuck," said the Squire; "stuck fast at Edgeton. No conveyance to be had, as a matter of course, upon race-day; and then, as Alice says, it's ball-night too; which is all what the newspapers call corroborative evidence. Well, if I had been in their place, and with their young legs, I should have walked."

"Oh, papa," cried Alice; "why, it's nine miles to the course!"

"And so dark and lonely!" said Mrs. Vaughan.

"Pooh!" said the Squire! "What are nine miles? But, heigho!" he sighed, "if the young fellows had been here we should have had some music; while, under the circumstances, there's nobody to sing to but a simple old farmer, and of course it is out of the question,—eh, Miss Maddy?"

"Oh, papa!" exclaimed Alice. "I'm sure Madeline will sing if you ask her, instead of teasing so. Won't you, dear?"

"Ask her, of course I will;" said the old gentleman. "But I wish somebody would ask me to smoke."

"Yes,—do ask him to, Annie," cried Alice. "You won't mind it, will you, dears? He'll be so grumpy, and do nothing but tease if he does not have his pipe."

Annie protested that she would not mind; but could not help thinking about her brother, and wondering whether he would smell it when she reached home. And then the required solicitation having been made, the old gentleman proceeded

to envelope himself in a cloud of vapour; while free from affectation, Madeline crossed over to the piano, and leaving her tea to get cold, sang in a sweet voice the simple air—"Fading Away."

The last notes were literally fading away, and the wires of the instrument vibrating with the concluding chords, when a buzz of voices was heard in the hall.

"Here they are!" cried Alice, bounding to the door. But upon opening it, she started back again with a faint scream, that brought her father upon his legs, waking him out of the nap he had been sent into by the lulling tones of Madeline's soft sweet voice;—while, really, "Fading Away," with all due respect to Miss Anne Fricker, is a delightful air to go to sleep by.

"Halloa!" exclaimed the head of the family, "what's the matter?—poachers? Why, what the devil have you all been doing, eh?" he continued, as followed by Mrs. Vaughan, Made-

line, and Annie Newman, he hurried into the hall, where stood Tom Phipps and Stephen, supporting Frank between them—he looking deadly pale, and more than half stupified; one of his arms hung helpless by his side; while, in place of a hat, a pocket-handkerchief deeply stained with blood was tied round his head. As for Tom Phipps, his mouth was puffed up, one of the lips cut open, and an eye completely closed—while his clothes were a happy combination of rags and mud. Stephen, too, was in very little better plight; for one of his cheeks was badly cut; and as for his hands—to use Tom's *Bell's Life* phrase—they were completely "barked." So that, altogether, there really was some excuse for the Squire's very inelegant expressions.

But leaving words, the first proceeding was to place Frank upon the sofa, where he sank back with a half-suppressed groan; and then ensued a regular scene of bell-ringing, running in and out, wound-washing and ban-

daging; while, in spite of their pale faces and anxious eyes, it was wonderful how calm and useful the younger ladies became; in fact, so attentive were they, that no bystander could have felt a spark of pity for the wounded men on account of the envy that would have filled his breast.

Among other damages, that lucky dog, Frank, had received an ugly cut upon the head; but the gentle attention and sympathising glances seemed to make it very bearable; while for medicine, the Squire mixed him a stiff glass of brandy-and-water, which seemed to bring him round a little, though it did not do what Tom Phipps prophesied cheerfully, but with a very rueful face, "set him upon his legs again," for he seemed to prefer lying still and receiving ministrations.

Every one whose services could be enlisted lent a hand to the sufferers: some fetched cold —some hot water; some myrrh, lint, diachylon, linen rag, handkerchiefs for making slings; it

having been unanimously declared that the services of the doctor were not required; while, no doubt in complete antagonism to all the laws of surgery, the Squire, for his part, kept pooh-poohing the idea of tea, and placing hot glasses of grog before each of the sufferers.

"Now, then," said the old gentleman, reverting to the question of the doctor, when all the wounds and contusions had received attention, and the basins, sponges, and rags had been cleared away;—"Now, then, I think if the doses I prescribed are repeated by-and-by, we shall after all be able to do without old Childe, eh? —You seem worst, Frank, or else sham the most. What do you say, shall we want the doctor?"

"Oh, no, not for me," said Frank, but in rather a faint voice; "leaving out marks, I think I shall be all right in the morning."

"I don't," said the Squire; "but, for all that, you seem to want no chopping, or sawing, or sewing up; and I dare say one of you, ladies,

will try the effect of a little stitching upon Tom Phipps's lip."

Of course Tom professed his willingness to be operated upon, and the ladies declined the duty; while fresh water having been brought, and the tea distributed, the Squire, who had all along kept up a running fire of cross-examining questions, now called for a fuller explanation of the mishap.

"Now, then," said he, "it's only fair that we should have the full particulars. You seem to have come off the best, Master Tom; so, if that lip will work at all, suppose we have your version first?"

"Well, sir," said Tom, speaking in a peculiar lispy way, "to begin with, I may as well own that it was all through my stupidity that it happened. But, first of all," he continued, dropping entirely his customary flippancy, and walking up to the sofa to take Frank's hand, "I have to thank you, old fellow, for the gallant way in which you protected me. For I'm such a cow-

ardly, undersized, little beggar, that I honestly believe that great hulking brute of a fellow would have killed me."

"Oh, nonsense!" said Frank. "It was a case of brothers-in-arms."

"Ah!" groaned Tom, rubbing himself very softly, "I wish we could have made it a case of brothers-in-legs, and, avoiding their sticks, have cut ours. You see, sir," he continued, addressing the Squire, "we tried to get a dog-cart, over yonder; but after an hour-and-a-half's hunt, the jolly a thing of any kind could we get but a donkey-cart; and it really was a stunning little donkey—went like winking. But his royal highness the Duke from Cambridge, there, declared that he would not set his legs within it to please anybody; and proposed that we should walk, in which he was aided and abetted by that monster with the bruised and cut face."

And so Tom Phipps continued his story. But the battering he had received, the excitement, and eke the brandy-and-water, made him so

prolix, and necessitated so many interpolations from his friends, that it will be more to the reader's advantage if the words are taken out of the little gentleman's mouth and allowed to filter down through the pen of the writer, in a fresh Chapter.

END OF FIRST VOLUME.

BRADBURY, EVANS, AND CO., PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.